JULY 1962

Commentary

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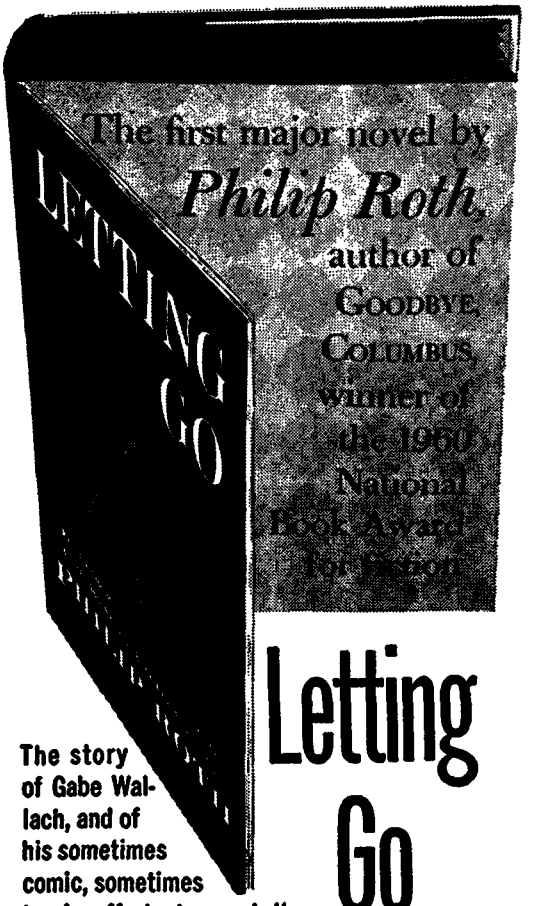

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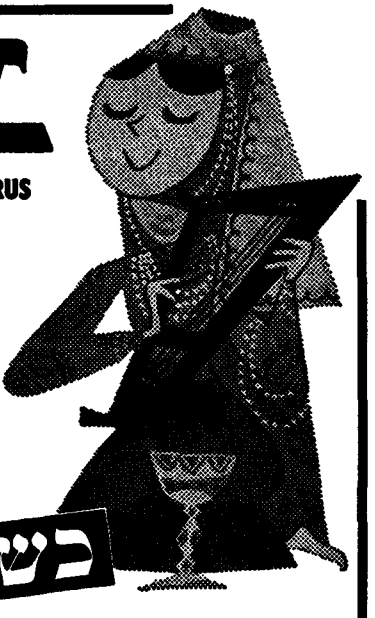

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THE NEW AMERICAN LIBERALISM

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

WHAT IS THE condition of liberalism in the United States today? There are many far more competent than I am to describe the American scene and far worthier to pass judgment on the American Left. But it is sometimes useful to see ourselves as others see us; and it is because Americans have a predilection for seeing themselves reflected in a foreign mirror, even if the reflection is distorted, that I have dared to put these thoughts on paper.

In view of the title, however, I should perhaps give warning that what follows are the impressions of a type almost unknown in the United States—a professional politician who is also an avowed intellectual. This species—along with the intellectual weeklies in which we write—is as well established in England as it is rare in the United States. Just as there is no counterpart in American journalism to the *New Statesman* and the *Economist,* so there is no counterpart in American politics to Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Labor opposition and onetime university lecturer in economics, or Enoch Powell, Conservative Minister of Health and onetime professor of Greek at Sydney University. Even with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in the White House and J. K. Galbraith ambassador in Delhi, the difference between the status of the intellectual in British and American politics is not removed. President Kennedy has recruited an army of "mental technicians" from the universities to serve as his experts and temporary civil servants on the New Frontier, just as their predecessors were recruited thirty years ago to run the New Deal. But we have not yet been privileged to see liberal intellectuals manning up the Senate or running the Democratic party machine—like their counterparts in Britain.

Compared with British socialism, American liberalism, it seems to me, is still sundered, both emotionally and practically, from the everyday world of machine politics. And the supreme demonstration of this separation was the cult of Adlai Stevenson, worshipped by all liberals for the defects of decision that he shared with them—which made him, though in all other ways superior to Harry Truman, a vastly inferior politician.

Already, in writing these words, I have revealed one of those insular British assumptions on which my judgment of American liberalism will be based. And, having got that far, I may as well declare the rest of my prejudices, so that, before he reads my account of the American Left, the reader can be forewarned about the kind of Englishman from whom it comes.

(1) As a left-of-center socialist—erstwhile supporter of Aneurin Bevan and present critic of Hugh Gaitskell—I regard

R. H. S. CROSSMAN, M.P., the eminent political analyst, is a member of the Labor Party Executive Committee. Mr. Crossman's article on "Gentile Zionism and the Balfour Declaration" appeared in our June issue. His most recent book is *A Nation Reborn.*

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President Kennedy as a Good Thing—probably the most valuable single political asset in the possession of Western democracy. His Cuban fiasco, and his failure to break out of the "containment" policy as applied to China, are more than counterbalanced, in my judgment, by his determination to find terms of coexistence with Khrushchev in Berlin, even if this means an open break with Adenauer and de Gaulle. As for nuclear strategy, because I am against a British, French, and, above all, a German nuclear deterrent, I welcome unreservedly Kennedy's determination to retain the American nuclear monopoly and to assert an unambiguous American leadership inside the Western alliance.

(2) In Europe, I am opposed to the British government's attempt to shirk the solution of its internal domestic problems by crawling into the Common Market. Indeed, I regard this as an abdication which, if completed, would mean the break-up of the Commonwealth. I should like to see the Labor party fight the next election on this issue—and win—by showing that socialism is a practical alternative to joining the Six.

(3) In our domestic Labor differences, I am as opposed to the "Revisionists," who would have us scrap nationalization in order to woo the anti-socialist vote and assure a Labor government of American support, as I am to the unilateralists who want Britain to break with America and adopt an "Indian" policy of neutralism outside NATO. It is my conviction that we should *both* remain inside NATO *and* carry out those rigorous measures of socialist planning necessary to put our economic house in order.

(4) I regard all talk of special British relationship with the U.S. and all boast about our capacity to mediate between the Americans and the Russians as comforting wish-fulfillment. Nevertheless, we can still exert a decisive influence in NATO, provided we realize that the kind of job a British Labor government could do over world peace must in future be preconditioned and limited by the political and strategic requirements of the American administration. Geography and history have anchored us just as irrevocably in the Western alliance as they have anchored Poland in the Eastern alliance. And those who compare Britain with China and suggest that Hugh Gaitskell could have the effect on Kennedy which Mao exerts on Khrushchev fail to see the difference between an ex-imperial nation in decline and an ex-colonial empire, whose energies are for the first time being released by the ruthless lever of revolution. The Chinese Communists know that, in their relations with Russia, time is on the side of their ever increasing independence. We British, on the other hand, have got to admit that the period of independent British power is over.

All this means that, in the last resort, the prospects of a Labor government building socialism at home and developing a peace policy abroad are strictly limited and conditioned by the achievements of American liberals. If *they* create the right climate of public opinion, if *they* educate the politicians on the right lines, then the chances of a Labor government over here are enormously enhanced.

When American liberalism suffered its catastrophic rout during the McCarthyite epoch, this sense of dependence had not yet developed in the British Left. We were still convinced that our government held the key to peace, and the Labor party was split into nuclear warriors, confident that an independent British deterrent was all-important, and nuclear pacifists, equally confident that, by abandoning the H-bomb, Britain could set an example that America and Russia were bound to follow. Now, however, this controversy has become stale and unprofitable, since both sides must admit that the independent British deterrent, if indeed it exists, is a negligible factor in the world balance of power. Whether we keep it or whether we

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scrap it is an important issue of British defense policy but, in terms of world politics, has little significance. What really matters, to Britain as well as to the United States, is American nuclear strategy, and even the most anti-American ideologue in the Labor party must admit that this strategy will be made in the White House.

Is there an American liberalism strong and united enough to help in making it? In order to answer that question one must try to assess the effects of the McCarthyite epoch on American democracy. Of course, the United States has suffered a heavy loss of civil liberty. The FBI, which used to be far weaker and have far less power than its British counterpart M.I.5, has now become enormously stronger and far more aggressive. The individual now lives under a degree of state surveillance that would have been condemned by all leaders of American public opinion as quite insupportable even ten years ago. And, as always happens in such cases, once the obvious excesses of counter-security have been smoothed down, public opinion comes to accept, almost without noticing it, all inroads on freedom. How often have I heard an American visitor in England telling me with a thrill in his voice how he listened to a Communist speaker on his soapbox, or how he met at lunch a leading C.P. trade unionist, who talked quite openly about his party activity. It is not till an American visits a country where the Communist party is not proscribed that he realizes how proscription not merely denies the Communist his right to exist but prevents *every* citizen from thinking freely and fearlessly about Communism.

Though McCarthyism has disappeared, it has left behind it quite a number of bulky inhibitions on the citizen's freedom of thought and the administration's freedom of action, which, because they are not continuously protested by liberalism, pass almost unnoticed. Of these the biggest is, of course, the inhibition on thinking and acting sensibly toward Communist China. The fact that both President Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson have had to bury some of their deepest convictions and continue the Eisenhower policy to Formosa almost unchanged indicates clearly enough that the veto of strident anti-Communism personified by the CIA and the FBI still operates in Washington and therefore inhibits freedom of thought throughout the country.

But these notorious losses of freedom as the result of McCarthyism seem to me to have been counter-balanced by gains that scarcely receive the notice they deserve. In the first place, the liberalism that was so ignominiously silenced by the Senator from Wisconsin has been purged of a good deal of dross. It has done no harm that, in those years of crisis, tens of thousands of so-called progressives, who had ardently supported Roosevelt's pro-Russian policies, ratted on their convictions and even, in some cases, felt a sudden patriotic urge to turn informer.

Equally advantageous has been the jettisoning of a whole bundle of half-baked ideas and slogans. One trouble about the New Deal was that it was born out of an emergency in a country where the reality of democracy is scarcely possible without a whole folklore of free enterprise. It grew up, therefore, without fixed principles and under the tutelage of a President who combined the patrician's contempt for middle-class theory with the machine politician's suspicion of programs and principles. Of course it had its ideological apologists; but they were replaced with each presidential reaction to a changing situation. Whereas Wilsonian liberalism comprised a real philosophy of life, Rooseveltian liberalism was a hodge-podge.

BUT, DESPITE ITS absence of principle and program, the New Deal did change the whole structure of American society, and after its impetus had been exhausted it was possible to look back and trace the pattern of principles implicit in its development. When Roosevelt died, the concrete achievements of the New Deal provided a sure basis in domestic affairs

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for his successor. The Fair Deal duly succeeded the New Deal and most of it was incorporated under Eisenhower in the folklore of American free enterprise.

In international affairs, however, Roosevelt left no legacy of concrete liberal achievement. On the contrary, his highly personal foreign policy reflected the inconsistencies in his own character—in particular the conflict between the inspired, if vague, idealism of his public utterances and the devious Machiavellianism with which he conducted White House politics. For what kind of world order did he stand? Even when he had got over his early isolationism he retained a curiously old-fashioned style of anti-imperialism, which made him suspicious of the old European powers and far too favorably inclined to the Soviet Union.

Among his followers, this attitude was even more exaggerated. In the British Labor movement, one of the chief defects that corrupted left-wing socialism was the double standard which it habitually applied in dealing with the Soviet Union. Whereas the doings of capitalist governments were judged, and usually found wanting, by the highest moral standards, allowances were made and excuses were found for the Soviet Union. This attitude, which in Britain was limited to left-wing socialists, became fashionable throughout progressive circles in the United States. By the end of the war it had spread so far that it completely dominated General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters in Rheims, where I was jointly in charge of psychological warfare with C. D. Jackson (now of *Life*) and William Paley (now of CBS). I shall never forget the wrath I aroused by doubting the wisdom of the Morgenthau Plan for pastoralizing Germany. A few months later I was nearly dismissed from my job for challenging the wisdom of a Supreme Commander who was content to halt on the Elbe and see the Russians take Berlin, "because they will treat the Germans toughly, as they deserve, whereas we should be soft to them."

Looking back now, we can see that this higher lunacy at SHAEF was almost the last expression of New Deal liberalism. As soon as he saw the realities of Stalinist power politics, Mr. Truman, in violent reaction against both the theories and the practice of his predecessor, declared cold war on the Russians and eagerly accepted from the planners of the State Department the policy of containment. In its first real contact with the realities of world politics, New Deal liberalism split. Here, on the defensive and unsure of themselves, stood the defenders of Roosevelt's dream—the end of European imperialism and a world order run by a United Nations dominated by an American-Russian axis. There, ranged against them, stood the nuclear warriors, converts to power politics (including German rearmament), architects of NATO, and, though they neither knew it nor intended it, both precursors and victims of McCarthyism. For, if the Senator from Wisconsin silenced the Rooseveltians and made "peace" and "coexistence" dirty words, he also destroyed the liberal cold warriors, headed by Dean Acheson.

For some years it looked as though both the contending wings of American liberalism had been submerged by McCarthyism and the only survivors of the flood would be the renegades who had saved themselves by wholesale conversion to the anti-Communist crusade. I can remember a time when only those with impeccably reactionary backgrounds dared to talk liberalism to the visiting Englishman!

NOW THAT THE McCarthyite flood has subsided, it is possible to see that its waters fertilized a new and exciting crop of ideas. The internal controversy between coexisters and cold warriors and the mass flight of the faint-hearted caused by McCarthyism have combined—so it seems at least to one British observer—to produce a new and healthier kind of liberalism, committed to the Kennedy administration, yet detached and critical enough to exert a worth-while influence upon its councils.

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Partly despite and partly because of the free controversy that is now once again possible, a new liberal consensus seems to be emerging.

The most exhilarating feature of this consensus is that it is based on a new analysis both of Western and Communist society and of world power politics—which makes its thinking completely different from that of the New Deal. The whole atmosphere of the 1930's was inimical to theory. The New Dealers were too busy putting their ideas into practice to make any serious study either of the capitalism they were trying to reform or of its Communist rival. And this refusal to theorize was one reason why they were so easily knocked off their balance by the blast of cold war and McCarthyism. In contrast, the new liberalism has already to its credit a whole number of theoretical studies, designed to end the sterile controversy between Communists and anti-Communists, free enterprisers and planners, unilateralists and multilateralists, and to ensure that, if liberals disagree, the disagreement will arise fruitfully from a concrete basis of fact.

The finest example of this new liberal analysis is, of course, Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*—the most revolutionary book since Keynes's *General Theory of Employment*. And, whereas the abstruseness of Keynes's arguments delayed the Keynesian revolution for many years, Galbraith's clarity has ensured that his exposure of the inherent imbalance in contemporary capitalism is intelligible not only to his fellow economists but to everyone interested in public affairs.

And now Erich Fromm, whom I had known only as a psychoanalyst, has given us a study of contemporary Communism, just as revolutionary as Galbraith's study of contemporary capitalism. When I opened *May Man Prevail?** I feared that it would be yet another agonizing reappraisal of the nuclear dilemma. But not at all. Mr. Fromm's aim is to separate, carefully and scientifically, the myth of Communism from the practice of Communism and, having done so, to consider the conditions of coexistence in a nuclear age. His book is written with a concise lucidity that should make his fellow authors green with envy and ensure that even its opponents understand what they dislike. His conclusion is that American capitalism and Russian Communism are rapidly growing toward each other. The Soviet system has long ceased to be socialist and become

> a state managerialism, using the most advanced methods of total monopolization, centralization, mass manipulation, and moving slowly from exercising this manipulation by violence to exercising it by mass suggestion. . . . The Soviet system is not the opposite of the capitalist system, but rather the image into which capitalism will develop unless we return to the principles of the Western tradition of humanism and individualism.

These conclusions, which in no way contradict Galbraith's analysis of the affluent society, are backed by a skillful use of some, at least, of the vast research into the Soviet system that has been proceeding in American universities and research institutes since the war. The choice for the world, Mr. Fromm shows, is not between free enterprise and planning but between ruthless, centralized, totalitarian planning and the kind of planned society that deliberately retains freedom by decentralizing administration and devolving responsibility.

Are we, then, to dismiss as empty rhetoric both the Communist theory of world revolution and Khrushchev's repeated claims that, in peaceful competition, capitalism is bound to disappear? To this issue Mr. Fromm, as a psychoanalyst, is able to devote a fascinating chapter, in which he distinguishes between the "operative" and the "ritualistic" aspects of any ideology, whether Christian or Communist. Christian ideology requires the believer to sell all he has and give his money to the poor. But it would be unwise for the Communists to base their plans on the assumption that, because Mr. Kennedy goes to church,

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he will carry out this directive. This part of Christianity, in Mr. Fromm's language, has ceased to be operative and become ritualistic. In the same way, he argues that it is absurd for Western policy-makers to base their plans on the assumption that, because Lenin said something in 1917, Mr. Khrushchev must act on it today. Propagandists on either side can have an easy time "proving" that, if the enemy is true to his ideology, he must behave in a certain way. But the job of the statesman and of the experts who advise him is not to believe his own propagandists but to distinguish between the behavior and the rituals of the other side. Mr. Fromm concludes this part of his argument as follows:

> Paradoxically, the only people who take the Communist ideology seriously are we in the United States, while the Russian leaders have the greatest trouble in shoring it up with nationalism, moral teaching, and increased material satisfaction.

Here it seems to me that the liberal heart has got the better of the psychoanalytical head. It is certainly high time to stop proving Khrushchev guilty of planning to conquer the world merely by quoting Lenin or Marx against him. But to conclude from this that Russian imperialism has lost all its aggressive and expansionist tendencies and to contrast it in this respect with an aggressive and revolutionary China seems to me to ignore the fact that totalitarian systems as such engender their own external aggressiveness.

I FOUND THE same defect in another, less brilliant but more profoundly disturbing example of the new liberalism. Professor H. Stuart Hughes, in his *An Approach to Peace*,* cleaves much closer to the New Deal tradition and his analysis of the nuclear dilemma ultimately drives him into a unilateralism which is surely the isolationism of the pre-war progressive in new guise. But, as sometimes happens to the intellectual of real integrity, Professor Hughes comes to the wrong conclusion for the right reasons, and we can learn a lot by accompanying him on his closely argued *An Approach to Peace*. Taking a new, hard look at his own country, Hughes tells us that, whereas Theodore Roosevelt was premature in his announcement of the American mission, John Kennedy raised his banner when "his people had been embarked on a world mission for two decades, but the force of their effort was already receding." America, in fact, no longer conforms to the myth of free-enterprise society.

> We have newly acquired virtues of our own, whose very existence most foreigners scarcely suspect, as a hard-working, non-competitive society, steering its patient, expert, pragmatic way between the completely planned and the ruthlessly competitive.

Like Mr. Fromm, Mr. Hughes is convinced that the aim of United States policy should be a Soviet-American alignment, designed to "domesticate" China and encourage the formation of seven or eight vast regional federations, as a step to world government.

Reading his highly civilized essays—they include a penetrating study of Gaullism and the best elucidation of the European socialist dilemma that I have ever read—I was struck by their tone of quiet, conservative pessimism and asked myself what appeal this would have for a younger generation in search of a cause to inspire them. Then I suddenly realized that it is not merely Professor Hughes's style that is conservative but the whole content of the liberal doctrine that he and Fromm, each starting from quite different positions, have evolved. The New Deal was not merely manned by young men: it was the movement of a young nation, inexperienced in power and unaware of its own potentialities. Less than thirty years later, the new liberalism reflects the fact that the United States has not only passed its zenith of world power: the American people too have lost their youthful energy and, in their national psychology, begun to display

* Atheneum, 204 pp., $4.50.

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a middle-aged spread. It is the new nations of Asia and Africa who, in the second half of the 20th century, will display the raw vigor, the untutored idealism of the inward-looking neutralism that characterized the America of the New Deal. If Hughes and Fromm are right—and I believe they are—the mission of the United States in the next decade will not be to establish New Frontiers but to preach a new utilitarianism, steadfastly preferring cool self-interest to ideals or ideology and so reaching what men of principle are bound to regard as a cynical basis of coexistence with a Russian Communist system that is also beginning to display the prudence, as well as the laxity, of middle age.

The truth is that "we are all conservatives now," that liberalism and socialism, which even thirty years ago were still doctrines of social revolution, have become necessities for conserving national independence and personal freedom. Our revolutionaries today are usually on the extreme Right. They consist of those angry old men and young men—the colons and colonels in Algeria, for example—who seek to put things back where they were before the colonial revolution and the end of the Western nuclear monopoly. The Left, on the other hand, feels that its new mission consists in persuading affluent and complacent democracies to accept the drastic disciplines and austerities at home and the new attitudes in external affairs which are necessary if the West is to avoid both nuclear war and peaceful defeat in competition with the Communists.

BUT HOW SHOULD the United States break out of the confining atmosphere of cold war and start the chain reaction that could lead to these desirable ends? By far the most hopeful solution of this problem has been suggested by Professor Charles E. Osgood, president of the American Psychological Association. I found the first statement of his gradualist approach in a study he contributed to the first volume of *The Liberal Papers,* edited by James Roosevelt.* The idea has been picked up and developed in considerable detail in another paperback, *The Hard Way to Peace,*† by a young professor of sociology at Columbia University, Amitai Etzioni. Osgood had attempted, in a fantastic flight of historical extrapolation, to imagine the series of actions and counteractions that an initiative of this kind could set going between America, Russia, and China. In *The Hard Way to Peace,* Etzioni works the same program out in more humdrum and, I must admit, rather more convincing detail.

If I understand the gradualists aright, their essential originality lies in the discovery that unilateralism should be applied not to nuclear disarmament, where it would certainly fail of its purpose, but to American diplomacy. The idea is to take a number of unilateral actions, first symbolic reductions of tension and then minor, if genuine, concessions, specifically designed to stimulate Russian reciprocation. Only when the international atmosphere has been transformed in this way, the gradualists claim, is there any chance for multilateral negotiations to have any prospect of success.

The new American liberalism, however, cannot confine its attention to American-Russian relations, or even to the corollary and secondary problems of Western Europe. If Western democracy is to be preserved, what is required in the 1960's is a world New Deal, a liberating movement initiated by the old and wealthy democracies of the Atlantic area, with the object of bridging the gap that now separates them from the ex-colonial peoples of the underdeveloped areas of the world.

Seymour Melman, whom I first met when he was investigating labor relations in a motor-car factory in my constituency of Coventry, has worked out, in *The Peace Race,*** his own plan for putting America's

* Doubleday Anchor (paperback), 354 pp., $1.25; Quadrangle, $5.00.

† Collier Books, 280 pp., $.95.

** Ballantine, 160 pp., $.50.

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unemployed to work on the industrialization of these emerging nations. I found his book an impressive blueprint, but as I read on I was increasingly plagued by a single question. How can a society devoted to the folklore and ritual of free enterprise, and steadfastly dismissing as socialist dictatorship any central planning of its economy, be persuaded to accept Professor Melman's advice? It is all very well for Mr. Fromm and Professor Hughes to assure us that America and Russia are growing more and more similar and that at the end of the race they may be scarcely distinguishable from each other. But at the very best this is a long prospect and, as both writers admit, the growing together is likely to involve the sacrifice of that liberty and respect for individual freedom which is the West's chief claim to superiority over the Eastern bloc. What possibilities are there of coexistence in the next ten years, when the two systems are still separate, different, and at loggerheads? At present no member of the Western alliance would be capable of carrying out Professor Melman's program without a revolutionary change not only in its political and economic structure but in the balance of power between the private and the public sectors of the economy. Whether one uses the word socialism or not is unimportant. What is undeniable is that Melman's peace race cannot be started, far less won, by a nation whose government is unable to control the allocation of national resources and the movements of prices and labor under a long-term plan.

As yet, no American liberal, so far as I know, has tried to fill this glaring gap in the new doctrine. Professor Galbraith exposed the built-in imbalance and inherent contradictions of modern capitalism. But when he came to suggest how they should be dealt with, his courage failed him and his mountain of analysis produced a mouse of a sales tax—combined with a general assurance that a President who took the advice of Professor Galbraith could expect unemployment to melt away. Mr. Fromm and Professors Hughes and Etzioni are equally reticent when it comes to the question of the political and social changes required within the American system. Apparently they feel that, though it is now possible to start a radical re-thinking of the United States's foreign relations, the liberal revival has not advanced far enough to permit as frank a discussion of domestic policies. Or can it be that all of them are responding instinctively to that American distrust of European theory and dislike of third parties that has so far prevented the emergence of the American Labor party on which British well-wishers, such as Harold Laski, used to set their hearts?

It is not for me to find an answer to this question, but I cannot resist the temptation to end this tribute to a renascent American liberalism with a wild guess about the future. I do not believe that we shall ever see an American Labor party, far less a party pledged to carry out a socialist program. On the other hand, the survival instinct of the American people gives it an almost unique capacity to close its eyes and ears in periods of prosperity and then suddenly to revert to an open-minded acceptance of strong leadership and extreme policies in periods of crisis. I believe that external and internal developments are conspiring to create the crisis out of which there will emerge a second New Deal that would take the United States most of the way toward the system that we, on the other side of the Atlantic, would describe as democratic socialism. And, if this prediction is correct, we can at least be sure of one thing—American liberalism is much better prepared for the responsibilities that would face it in the socialist New Deal of the 1960's than it was thirty years ago.

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BEN B. SELIGMAN

MAN, WORK & THE AUTOMATED FEAST

AUTOMATION IS SAID to have ancient beginnings. To be sure, the technology from which it stems goes back several centuries, at least. Automatic devices in the middle 18th century included a mechanical loom for the manufacture of figured silks; James Watt's steam engine utilized a fly-ball governor which controlled the speed at which his contrivance operated; and it has been suggested that automation's basic concept—the linkage of machines—is evident in the detachable harpoon head of the Eskimo. Yet to assert that automation is simply the latest link in a great chain of industrial history obscures what is patently a new phenomenon. In the old days, industrial change developed through fission: division of labor was the key to progress and work was made available to a huge pool of unskilled persons who in the main had been forced to migrate from farm to city. Today, it is precisely these unskilled, together with semi-skilled and even some of management's people, who are displaced and poured back into the pool. Furthermore, automation represents a marked acceleration of change with so cumulative a force that this alone spells a profound difference from what went on before.

BEN B. SELIGMAN's new book *Main Currents in Modern Economics* has just been published by the Free Press. Director of the Department of Education and Research of the Retail Clerks International Association in Washington, D.C., Mr. Seligman also writes widely on problems of labor and economics.

Automation is already moving with a rapidity that threatens to tear apart existing social and organizational structures; according to some observers, it will even alter the habits of thought that men have up to now prided themselves on. Such a prospect is perhaps not surprising when we consider the cataclysmic results of the 18th century's Industrial Revolution: the changes then were so swift as to constitute a whole new phenomenon. And Marx and Weber and Sombart had shown convincingly how human and social transformation accompanied technological transformation.

Now, new industrial functions, new economic forms, new work habits, and new social headaches are being created in ways that signify a kind of dialectic leap. Even John Diebold, who claims to have invented the word "automation" and whose ebullient advocacy of computer technology has done much to spread the gospel, confesses: "I believe that [automation] marks a break with past trends, a qualitative departure from the more conventional advance of technology that began with jagged pieces of flint and progressed up to the steam engine."

Why is this so? Up to recent times, technology simply sought to substitute natural force for animal or human force. In the early days, primacy of place was given to windmills and waterfalls. Then came metallurgical discoveries; and the screw and the lathe made possible the machine, essentially a contrivance which

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man could watch in action. But man remained at the center of the whole business, essential to both operation and control, still more or less the maker and master of materials. With automation, man not only loses irrevocably his function as *homo faber*; he no longer even possesses the character of *animal laborans*. At best, he is a sometime supervisor of a flow process. Actual control is removed from him and given to an electronic contraption whose feedbacks and servomechanisms make it possible to produce goods and manipulate information in a continuous system, without human participation.

TO REALIZE WHAT automation implies, we must examine the kinds of machines employed and see what they do to people and organizations. Essentially, today's scientific upheaval comprises four aspects: the conversion of industrial materials into a flow; the setting of uniform standards so that output can be treated as a flow; the utilization of electronic computers with built-in feedbacks to enable the exercise of automatic control; and the application of new energy sources to the whole process. Thus, raw materials, which represent the "input" of an industry, must be handled without human hands, as in a modern meat-packing plant. Production, at one time a series of discrete steps, is completely integrated by means of transfer machines. In some cases, computers tied to cams or templates can make the producing machine follow a predetermined pattern with greater accuracy and sharper tolerances than were dreamed possible in the heyday of the skilled machinist. Computers, into which all sorts of complex information can be fed by "programmers," automatically correct errors. A wide range of goods is now produced in this startling manner—chemicals, automobiles, steel, glassware, electric bulbs, television sets, beverages, and drugs, to name a few. Factories are able to function 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, while manpower needs are reduced dramatically. And with the development of nuclear energy for industrial power, manufacturers no longer need to be near their source of raw materials; they can set up their plants closer to markets, or—if they are seeking to escape the union organizer—in the most isolated of places. Yet one industry necessarily must relate itself more intimately with the next; a seamless web envelops all the entrepreneurs and their works.

There is no lack of Panglossian attempt to assuage our concern. In the long run, we are told (who lives that long?), natural economic forces will work out the necessary adjustments. A shorter work week might stem from automation, suggest some experts; but at the thought that men might work less than the ordained forty hours a week, all kinds of people, from Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg down, immediately explode with great cries of anguish. Or we are told that human desires are insatiable: demand will grow, enough to reabsorb men displaced by machines—which calls to mind an apocryphal conversation between Henry Ford II and Walter Reuther. "How," said Ford, as he revealed his automatic factory, "are these machines going to pay you dues, Walter?" "How," replied Reuther, "will they buy your autos?"

We are assured that more jobs will be created by new industry, that higher skills will be required, that economic stability will be guaranteed by automation. There are pitifully few facts available to support these euphoric hopes. More likely a vast trauma awaits us all, to use Irving Howe's phrase. Then why automate? The underlying motives were exposed with unaccustomed bluntness in one of the trade journals recently when an automation advocate wrote: "[Machines] don't call in sick; they don't talk back; they work early and late and without overtime; they don't get tired; and last, but far from least, they don't line up at the cashier's window every week for a slice of the operating funds."

The automobile industry illustrates how

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an integrated set of machines can function. There the engine production line, for example, consists of a series of drilling, boring, and milling operations connected by transfer machines which move the engine blocks from one point to the next. Tolerances are checked automatically; if something is awry, the whole line is stopped by an electronic device. Or one can see an automatic assembly machine put the components of a television set on a printed board and then solder them into place. These are repetitive operations and their economic justification stems from the replacement market. There is not much of a style factor here and such model changes as do occur can be handled with relative ease. Yet even where variation in the product is essential, as in machine tools, the operation still can be made automatic.

The machine tool industry, mainly a congeries of small shops employing highly skilled labor, has notoriously resisted innovation. But since it is now so closely allied to Air Force and Space technology, it has been impelled willy-nilly by the needs of the armed forces to the adoption of newer techniques. Formerly, a human operator worked from blueprints, controlling his equipment with a variety of jigs and templates. To avoid waste, and perhaps because he was concerned with craftsmanship, he worked slowly. But now, all the variables can be "programmed" into computers, and with the technique known as "numerical control" these electronic brains direct the same cutting tools, handle the same jigs and templates once operated by the machinist. Most important of all, this sort of automation is economically feasible for small lots in which there are changes in product design.

The key here is feedback, the simplest case of which is the home thermostat turning a furnace on and off in order to maintain a constant room temperature. In essence, signals are sent from one part of the automated line to another, correcting errors, shifting power loads, or modifying the speed of the line. No human need adjust gauges or read thermometers or press buttons. Feedback or servomechanisms do a better control job than humans, especially when many elements are involved. Whereas the human eye can follow the motion of a gauge at about two cycles a second, a servomechanism does about 100 a second. Now, marry feedback to a computer and automation is complete. The computers, really giant adding machines and calculators, receive information from the gauges and thermometers, analyze the data, and then transmit new instructions to other gauges and instruments.

COMPUTERS, WHOSE basic concept goes back to Blaise Pascal, were developed in their electronic form during World War II to help guns hit their targets more efficiently. There are two basic types—the analog and digital computer. The former operates much as the desk calculator, adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and even integrating. It is a kind of electronic slide rule able to apply higher mathematics to problems of rates of change in various flows. However fast it might have been, for the engineer, mathematician, and operations researcher it was not fast enough. So the digital computer was devised, a machine that employs the binary number system and consequently can only add and subtract. This is no impediment, for like an electronic abacus, the digital computer sends its impulses forward at an unbelievable speed, giving it a marked advantage over the analog machine. Moreover, digital computers have "memory" drums in which data can be stored for future use. The electrical pulses in a digital computer last less than one-millionth of a second. Information can be extracted from the memory drum in about ten-millionths of a second.

Of course, a considerable amount of human brain power is expended before the computer can be put to work. This is the science of programming. Instructions are written on a process sheet, then coded and entered on tape. That is, English is trans-

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lated into machine language. The control unit of the system then "reads" the tape, gives forth with the appropriate electrical impulses, and sets the servomechanisms to work. One writer compared the operation to an old-fashioned player piano in which the punched holes in the roller actuate the hammers to bang out either the "Basin Street Blues" or a Beethoven sonata.

Lending a nightmarish quality to these developments is the current scientific talk about artificial intelligence. Machines, it is said, can be built to recognize certain patterns and can learn to plan simple tasks. While the computer may be something of a moron, awaiting instructions from a human Ph.D., the fact that an electrical contrivance can be made to learn anything is astonishing enough. If a heuristic or generalized solution is sufficient, then a thinking computer is no longer science fiction. Chess-playing machines are at least feasible: the only problem seems to be that they would have to review the outcomes of all possible plays and that might take centuries. Perhaps that is what makes them morons.

The names one often sees bandied about —PERT, ALGOL, COBOL, GECOM, SURE—are merely abbreviations for specific programming methods, each utilizing one or more computer installations constructed by Burroughs, Bendix, Rand, or IBM. PERT, for example—Program Evaluation and Review Technique—is based on the concept of a tree network with alternatives to be considered at each node of the tree. Since the computer works so much faster than the human mind and also uses stored information, it can review the accumulating cost of a flow process at each step and then direct the sequence of decisions along the critical or least-cost pathway. PERT originated in the Polaris Missile Project when it became essential to keep track of some 11,000 contractors and subcontractors. Again, military need provided the research motive. So complex can these matters become that the Defense Department had to work out a standardized pidgin English to coordinate programming.

IT IS SOMETIMES said that the considerable investment in these systems precludes all but the largest firms from employing them. This is not so. Any number of consulting services are available for smaller concerns to meet data-processing needs, and some firms have set up cooperative research centers. Span, Inc. is one such co-op doing the bookkeeping for a number of insurance companies in Hartford; Tamcor maintains brokerage records in New York, and IBM, the biggest of them all, makes its equipment available to all comers through 70 locations around the country. In fact, the latter is now compiling tape libraries, dubbed by one journal "computer laundromats." Thus, the new technology is available to anyone who wants to make use of it.

All this must be worthwhile, for rental costs run from $12,000 a year up and outright purchase of computer equipment can cost millions. Some $2 billion has been invested in computers by private companies since 1950, and this does not include what the government has spent. It is estimated that by 1970 computer sales will hit $500 million a year or about 2½ times present outlays. When the Pennsylvania Railroad automated its Conway, Pa. yards, it expected to recoup its $34 million cost within three years. At Ford, 9 workers at 3 machines putting holes into crankshafts replaced 39 workers at 39 machines. A Philco plant reduced its work force by 25 per cent by using printed circuitry. A computer engineer once remarked that he could cut one man off the payroll for every $5,000 spent on automated equipment. And finally, the initial cost of installing a computer system, according to Wassily Leontief, comes to no more than 6 per cent of total plant investment. The value of the new technology seems undeniable.

By now "Detroit" automation is quite well known. Automatic machines, linked

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by transfer equipment, move engine blocks through a complete manufacturing process, performing 530 precision cutting and drilling operations in 14½ minutes as compared to 9 hours in a conventional plant. The Chrysler Corporation's recent breakthrough on computer "balancing" of assembly lines, essentially a "combinatorial" problem, now defines each job so rigidly that little liberties like a worker's taking a few minutes out for a smoke become serious impediments to the smooth flow of cars. An automated power plant in Louisiana saved $175,000 in fuel, $100,000 in maintenance, $1.5 million in eliminating delays and mishaps, and $500,000 in labor. A Jones & Laughlin sheet-plate mill turns out strip at the speed of 70 miles an hour with no labor other than the supervision of engineers. Punch-card systems in a reversing roughing mill modify ingot shapes, and the computer even "remembers" what to do when the forms have to be changed. Foundry work, traditionally a hand operation, is now being tied to the computer. In petroleum and chemicals, the story is almost ancient: as far back as 1949 catalytic cracking plants were turning out 41,000 barrels a day with instruments and only a few workers to watch gauges. In a Texaco refinery the computer controls 26 flow rates, 72 temperatures, 3 pressure levels, and 3 gas combinations. General Electric uses segmented "automation," that is, batch production, for motors of varying models up to 30 horsepower. Ribbon machines make 800 electric bulb blanks a minute, running without end, and requiring only one worker who stands by to make an occasional adjustment.

EVEN IN THE office and retail store, one finds evidence of the new technology. Although office work has expanded tremendously since 1910 (today 17 per cent of the labor force is found in the office as compared to 5 per cent fifty years ago), it is precisely the enormous quantity of paper work and routine operation that makes automation feasible here. Banks, utilities, insurance companies, and government bureaus have eagerly made room for yards of the new equipment—so much faster is the computer than the old-fashioned bookkeeper and clerk. As a result, office work no longer is the growth industry it was—at least in terms of jobs. One California firm, studied by Mrs. Ida R. Hoos, put only two accounting operations on a computer and promptly eliminated 300 out of 3,200 office jobs and drastically altered the functions of some 980 others.

In retailing, automation starts with inventory and accounting records. Sales data are transmitted to control centers where billing, inventory, and credit information is stored. Bad credit risks are automatically checked and information returned to the sales clerk before the package can be wrapped. Sylvania and IBM have been working on automatic check-out counters for supermarkets—the number of cash registers would be reduced, as well as the number of workers. Ferris wheels, conveyor belts, chutes, and slides, all controlled by electronic computers, deliver garments from receiving platforms to stockrooms and even return the merchandise to the ground floor if necessary. Eventually we will pay our traffic penalties to a computer: in Illinois, records of driver violations are stored in a computer and the fines calculated by machine.

This, then, is the automated feast. Tasks are accomplished with unimaginable speed. Decisions are made by coded instructions and errors quickly detected. Facts are stored and extracted from memory drums. The machines learn and "perceive": they analyze stock market conditions; establish rocket flight patterns before the shot is fired into space; write television scripts that compare favorably with what is now available; compose music; translate; and play games. They combine high technical competence with just enough of an I.Q. to keep them tractable. They do precisely the kind of work to which junior

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executives and semi-skilled employees are usually assigned.

No slur is intended here, for in addition to the ordinary worker it is the middle manager, the backbone of the average corporation, who will be most affected by automation. He has a bleak future indeed, when computers relay information to each other, do all the scheduling, and control manufacturing from inception to the point at which the product is packaged and rolled onto a box car. It is rather the archon of industry—as Edward Ziegler has dubbed him—who ultimately wins out, for with the elimination of both plant and office staff, this man at the very top gains even tighter control over the decision-making process. The sort of organizational looseness that prevailed prior to the advent of the computer is eliminated, and corporate structure becomes more formal, more "integrated," since with the computer there must be greater "cooperation." The number of links in the chain of command is reduced drastically; vice-presidents are soon out of a job. No less an authority than Herbert A. Simon of Carnegie Tech has said that by 1985 machines can dispense with all middle echelons in business. Production planning is handed over to the digital demon, while both the middle manager and the displaced worker drive taxicabs. The sociologist may very well ask, whither the American dream of status and success?

Quite often, the computer engineer tries to build his own empire within the corporation. Fresh to the ways of business life, he has unabashedly played havoc with established relations. He and his programmer cohorts, cutting across all divisions, have often ignored and undermined the authority of department heads and vice-presidents. Many middle management people in automated companies now report that they are awaiting the ax, or if more fortunate, retirement. Bright young men leave for non-automated firms, hoping to reach the top elsewhere before the computer catches up with them. Sometimes the new elite does lose out: it has not been unknown for a computer installation to be yanked as a result of corporate internecine warfare.

USUALLY THOUGH, ARCHON and engineers are in complete accord. With the computer creating certain expectations, the firm must operate through a series of highly rigid sequences. Flexibility has been dispensed with, for the whole plant is now a single technical structure in which total performance must be "optimized." The engineer examines each step in the process solely in terms of efficiency—industrial logic of the most unremitting kind takes primacy of place. Under automation, the engineer or mathematician is *the* skilled man in the plant, while workers, those who remain and those who do not, are expected to adjust with equanimity to a situation for which they have had no responsibility. In fact, the engineer's attitude quite often is tough and hard, too much so for ordinary men: what the worker doesn't know, says he, won't hurt him. The scientists appreciate only "facts": the human problems of an industrial system frequently have little meaning for them. Unlike the organization men of the 50's, they are usually "inner directed," disturbers of the corporate peace, free-booters in pursuit of the idols of efficiency. Since the latter is measured by high profit and low cost, such scientific ruthlessness meets the approval of the archon. The latter really doesn't know what the scientist is doing: top management merely voices a faith based on payoff. Thus the programmer, who often assumes the aspect of a medieval alchemist, runs his own show, designing projects, cutting corporate red tape with abandon, and advising the industrial relations department that labor displacement is "none of your business." At best, the engineer can parrot some devotee of the conventional economic wisdom by repeating that automation creates new demand and new jobs, upgrades the worker and inspires everyone

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with its challenge. There must be a certain glory in the marvels of automation: but the men who once worked in the chemical plants, oil refineries, and steel mills are now out of sight and out of mind.

Between 1953 and 1960, a million and a half jobs disappeared. In one plant, studied by Floyd Mann of Michigan State University, automation reduced the work force by half. In the electrical industry, output increased 21 per cent between 1953 and 1961, while employment declined 10 per cent. There was a loss of 80,000 production jobs in steel during the decade of the 50's. In the shift from aircraft to missiles, 200,000 jobs went down the technological drain. For the 5-year period 1955–1960, production workers in automobile factories were down 21 per cent. All this displacement occurred in an affluent society that itself went through four postwar recessions each of which left behind an increasingly hard-core residue of unemployment—3 per cent in 1951–53; 4 per cent in 1955–57; and 5 per cent in 1959–60.

Full employment for the next 10 years means creating 12 million new jobs—25,000 a week, or almost double the number of new openings in the 1947–57 decade. Extending the period to 1961, we find that output rose 65 per cent while the number of production and maintenance jobs declined. True, white collar workers increased 7 per cent, but now automation is making them just as insecure. If we assume that demand in the 60's will expand at the same rate as it did in 1947–57, then output by 1970 may very well be 50 per cent greater. However, if the present rate of productivity is maintained, then the number of required man-hours will have increased by 12 per cent, providing only 75 million jobs at the end of the decade. Thus, about 8 million persons, 10 per cent of the labor force, will have no work. And this is a moderate forecast, for should the secular growth rate fall below 3 per cent per annum, as is conceivable, output will have gone up about 40 per cent. Add to this the effects of automation, and the job increase by 1970 may be only 2 million, leaving a residue of perhaps 10 million persons without jobs.

Is this so weird a tale? The ever optimistic Bureau of Labor Statistics' chief, Ewan Clague, recently admitted to an Arden House conclave that 200,000 jobs a year would be lost through "disemployment by automation." He found that in 70 per cent of manufacturing industries such "disemployment" comprised four-fifths of the jobs lost. And his estimate did not include computer displacement among white collar workers.

THE UNIONS now know what automation can do to them. No matter how strong the security clause in a collective bargaining agreement, the serious drop in membership for most internationals is a harbinger of approaching catastrophe. Further, it is so much easier now for plants to escape to communities where unionism seems to represent little threat. And in such towns, management does not worry about a labor supply, for under automation what need is there for workers? There are also related problems for the unions: What happens to seniority? How about pension rights? Can traditional unionism with its roots in craft concepts cope with an industry whose shape has assumed the form of a process? Is the programmer a part of the bargaining unit? Or does his role in decision-making place him in management's ranks? And how effective is the strike when a handful of engineers can operate the whole works? This last question was answered in Port Arthur, Texas, where about 3,700 production workers walked off the job at an oil refinery, leaving 600 white collar employees and supervisors behind to run the plant at 65 per cent of capacity. One labor relations man was reported to have said: "Maybe they ought to have removed a couple of transistors."

Some have argued that the displaced can be directed to jobs in the service and

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white collar fields. What jobs? Automation, as we have already noted, has been moving into these fields in the last three years just as rapidly as elsewhere. In 1960, at the Census Bureau, 50 technicians plus a battery of computers did the work that it had taken over 4,000 statisticians to do in 1950. The little black code numbers now appearing on bank checks inform us that our accounts are debited, credited, and cleared by a scanning device hooked into a computer. It is poor consolation, moreover, to be told that employment adjustments will be made via the A & P route —attrition and pregnancy—for this is an admission that there really are no jobs for those who want to work.

The notion that all who have been displaced by machines will quickly find new employment is a cheerful thought, something like whistling while walking through a cemetery. Some years ago, such cheerfulness was quite common, even among labor leaders. Walter Reuther's early speeches all but embraced the computer, so high was the regard for technology, so powerful the belief in growth and progress. The Joint Economic Committee's 1955 report on automation urged laissez-faire, for no serious problems were envisioned. In the short space of seven years, hesitation and doubts have cropped up. There is no longer the ancient and well-regarded optimism that more machines mean expanded employment elsewhere or that automation will upgrade workers. It is evident, rather, that the new technology enforces a deterioration of skills for the great mass of workers and offers only the social junk pile for the unskilled and untutored.

WHAT IS THE solution? Frankly, there is none, at least none of a definitive character. The numerous suggestions for dealing with the pressing problems that stem from automation are all piecemeal, pecking at a spot here and a point there. No amount of federal fiscal tinkering will meet the immediate needs of those who are attached to a dying industry. Economic growth, while essential, will not of itself put to work again the idle coal miner, ex-machinist, and troubled bookkeeper whose jobs have vanished like the first atom bomb tower. Administration economists believe that automated unemployment can be solved by turning on ordinary Keynesian tap valves: it's all a matter of failing effective demand, they assert. There seems little awareness in important circles that the American economy is undergoing deep-rooted and subtle structural changes and that it will take massive economic and social therapy to assuage the hurt.

The AFL-CIO has been advocating a series of measures, including meaningful retraining programs, especially for workers over forty, area redevelopment, better unemployment insurance, an improved national placement service, special help to relocate the "disemployed," higher pensions, and even shorter hours. But will we —American management, American unions, Congress, the administration— really expend the necessary hard thought? Don Michael doubts it, for it is unlikely, says he, that ". . . our style of pragmatic making-do and frantic crash programs can radically change in the next few years. . . ." It is hard to disagree.

Consider the retraining effort. A case of too little, if not too late, it is hardly a roaring success. In West Virginia, the federal pilot scheme plus the state's own 22-month-old program have been able to uncover new jobs for only half the 3,000 "graduates." Most of the others simply returned to the ranks of the unemployed. In Pennsylvania, 1,760 persons enrolled in retraining courses in 1957. Of these, 884 completed their re-education, 741 obtained new jobs. The state had a half million unemployed at the time.

Where private enterprise undertakes some corrective steps, it is usually found that a labor union had been doing the prodding, as in the meat-packing industry. Yet when 433 workers were laid off in Armour's Oklahoma City plant, only 60

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could qualify for retraining and those who did secure new employment had to accept a lower rate of pay. Some firms are genuinely disturbed about the effects of automation. For example, U. S. Industries, a manufacturer of electronic equipment, and the machinists union have agreed upon a jointly managed fund to study the entire question. The company's president, John Snyder, at least acknowledges that each one of his machines sends 60 workers scurrying to the unemployment insurance offices. Incidentally, one of U. S. Industries' contributions is the invention of automatic equipment to train displaced workers for typing and similar tasks.

THERE HAVE BEEN other experiments in adjustment. Some take the form of liberal severance-pay allowances. One of the earliest such schemes, though not related to automation per se, was the famous 1936 Washington Agreement between the railroad companies and the unions. Displaced workers receive 60 per cent of their average pay as severance compensation for periods as long as five years whenever mergers occur. In cases of relocation, moving expenses are paid and losses resulting from forced sale of homes reimbursed. More recently, another generous plan was agreed upon by TWA and its navigators, who if replaced by automatic instruments will receive $25,000 plus $400 a month for three years as severance. In addition, the now foot-loose navigators will be given free lifetime travel passes on the airline. Thus they will have at least acquired mobility and will be able to search for jobs in all corners of the globe. Yet such measures offer no genuine solution: they are mere palliatives, for they fail to confront the fundamental question—what does a man do with his time, either during the temporary period of affluence, or when the windfall resources will have given out, or for that matter, even when he has not been detached from industry?

Not every arrangement exhibits a handsome concern for the displaced. In the coal fields a contemptible alliance between John L. Lewis and the operators has cast adrift almost 300,000 miners. The coal industry, caught between the grinders of competitive fuels and high operating costs, was thoroughly run-down by the mid-40's. Deciding not to worry any more about the unemployed at the pits, Lewis acquiesced in rapid technological change. Output per day rose from 6.4 tons in 1949 to 14.4 tons in 1961; one ton of coal now requires less than half the labor it did a decade ago. At the Paradise, Kentucky coal field an automatic shovel larger than the Statue of Liberty strips 200 tons of material in one scoop. In Harvey Swados's words, Lewis decided to trust to time and mortality to resolve the problem of the unemployed. And so the coal industry no longer suffers from economic decay. With a return on investment of 7.5 per cent, it compares favorably with steel and oil. To hasten the day when his union can depend upon a healthy industry for its 40-cent per ton royalty, Lewis directed the mine workers to invest in sundry mine operations and even lent $35 million to Cyrus Eaton, whose interests include peace movements as well as coal. Of course, it would have been troublesome to apprise the membership of these transactions, so all the deals were carried through with great secrecy, only to be smoked out last year in a Tennessee lawsuit. At a recent convention of the union, an innocent delegate who suggested that perhaps something might be done for the unemployed was ". . . verbally torn to pieces by a buckshot charge of oratory from John L. Lewis himself." Declining dues are amply compensated for by investment returns in banks, mines, railroads, and power plants. Meanwhile, 300,000 miners continue to rot in the idle towns of Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

This sort of cooperation could set a strange trend if other unions were to adopt the Lewis formula. One that did is Harry Bridges's West Coast Longshoremen's International. Several years ago, the ILWU

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signed an agreement with the Shipping Association that was hailed as a reply to automation. Indeed, the retirement benefits are quite munificent and the pay scale was increased somewhat, but at the same time the employers were given the go-ahead signal to install a whole range of technological improvements which will virtually exclude entire blocs of workers not yet ready to retire. Moreover, the new work rules, extracted by the employers as a price for the higher pay and liberalized pensions, have intensified work loads on the docks virtually to the human breaking point.

THUS, ONE COMES back to an immediate step, which though not by any means a "solution," nevertheless offers a practicable way for mitigating some of the effects of automation—the shorter work week. Mere mention of this is apt to send a shudder down the backs of administration economists and devotees of the conventional wisdom. Expressing their horror at the thought that man should have even more leisure than he now enjoys, the latter urge that a shorter work week means less production and higher costs. And in the present context of growthmanship, this is unthinkable. Arthur Goldberg, whose grasp of legal subtleties contrasts sharply with his simplistic formulations of economic issues, warned the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union recently that fewer hours per week would ". . . impair adversely our present stable price structure [and] make our goods less competitive both at home and abroad. . . ." The enormous productive capacity of America's industry was conveniently forgotten, a capacity so enhanced by automation that it can more than compensate for the alleged loss of output. And this is to say nothing about the quality and content of contemporary "production"—that would require another essay. The point to observe now is the curious inner tension of an industrial system whose fundamental Puritan outlook demands an incessant, unremitting outpouring of goods (for what?) while at the same time it imposes dreary idleness and dismal futures on those to whom the cornucopia is directed. We may well ask, what is the feedback in this insane circle?

But to return to the shorter work week —a cursory review of its history would demonstrate how completely reasonable it is. Prior to 1860, the rule was dawn to dusk with as much as 72 hours as the weekly standard. Demands for a shorter span were met with the contention that 12 hours a day, 6 days a week had been divinely ordained in order to strengthen worker morality. Three decades later the work week had been shortened by 12 hours. In 1910, the average ranged from 51 to 55 hours, and at that time a work force of 34 million produced a Gross National Product of about $37 billion. The work week continued to shrink: in 1920, it was 48 hours; in 1929, 44 hours; and since 1946, 40 hours. By 1955, the labor force had almost doubled while GNP increased 10-fold as compared to 1910. And all the time the work week kept declining, about 13 hours in a 45-year span, or roughly 15 minutes a year.

Was anyone hurt? Did productivity lag? Has technology been impeded? The depression years aside, whatever unemployment did occur would have been unquestionably greater without the steady drop in hours. A continuation of this secular decline would cut back the normal work week by one hour every four years. According to one estimate, this might create about a million jobs a year which, together with the normal increase in job openings, could really begin to cut into the displacement caused by automation. When Harry van Arsdale of the New York electricians' union obtained a 5-hour day, he was savagely flayed for selfishness and lack of patriotism. Even the labor movement felt embarrassed. Arsdale insisted that he was only seeking to "spread the work." Now it seems, according to Theodore Kheel, the industry's arbitrator, that

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well over 1,000 new jobs will be made available as a result of the union's action.

What has happened in agriculture presents, in a sense, an object lesson we ought to heed. As W. H. Ferry remarked in a perceptive paper on affluence and plenty, the farm is technology's most notorious victory. Here abundance has become an economic catastrophe. So advanced is our agricultural establishment that even the 10 per cent of the labor force it now employs is too much. Farm output increased 77 per cent between 1910 and 1954, while land used for crops went up only 15 per cent. During the same period, labor on farms as measured by man-hours dropped over 30 per cent. This suggests an almost threefold rise in productivity. According to the late John D. Black, a leading farm expert, the major element in this change unquestionably was the substitution of machine power for muscle power. Yet the economic and political thrust of our system is such that 70 to 80 per cent of the federal government's spending on agriculture goes to counteract the price impact of an ever accumulating surplus.

The parallel between farm and industry is startling. There is enough grain in storage to feed everyone from Maine to Hawaii, but some 50 million Americans, barely manage to subsist, even today. The steel industry functions at 65 per cent of capacity, or thereabouts, while thousands of able-bodied men are shoved aside by automation. Strategic curtailment of production is employed, like the farm parity program, to distort the genuine capacities of our economy. Technology, rather than man, becomes the central focus of existence, and at the same time that it destroys, for example, the belief in the family farm, it seemingly ought to compel a desiccated concept of resource allocation and optimum production to retire in favor of a philosophy of distribution. But we really have no adequate social theory to deal with the latter. The ideas of a Galbraith, a C. Wright Mills, a Paul Goodman, or a Harvey Swados deal only with aspects of the problem. We await to be told what is happening to us, what we need to do. And even then we shall not listen.

It is of course a common cliché that scientific advances have outrun our capacity to deal with them. Technology, the practical and material basis of life, has acquired a tidal force of its own which threatens to inundate human thought. Moreover, modern technology, as evidenced by automation, manifests no orderly growth. Its leads and lags, its uneven development, create new power centers that result in unaccustomed strains. To be sure, this has happened before, but always at immense human cost. It is this that the high priests of automation fail to grasp, while those of us who are merely bystanders can only hope that society will eventually catch up with the engineers and scientists and archons of industry who see only a handsome profit in what the machine can do.

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ROBERT ALTER

ISRAELI WRITERS & THEIR PROBLEMS

Every country is endowed with a characteristic feature by which you can easily identify it. Russia has its steppes, Italy has its gondolas. But what is the distinctive feature of this country? Perhaps there is nothing really authentic about you or the life you lead; perhaps it is an unreal life. . . .

—Yitzhak Shenhar, "Country Town."

THE RECENT AMERICAN reissue of *A Whole Loaf,** Sholom J. Kahn's anthology of Israeli fiction, raises a number of questions about the kind of literature that is being created in Israel. The most obvious fact about this collection of stories—and about the Israeli literary scene as well—is that it is not a whole loaf at all, but two loaves so different from each other that they hardly seem to have been baked in the same oven. The organization of material in the Kahn collection is itself partly a concession to the profound disparity that exists between two broad modes of fiction practiced in Israel today. The first half of the anthology is devoted to "Wars and Independence" and mainly represents the younger generation of Israeli writers, that is, writers still under the age of forty when the volume was originally published in Tel Aviv in 1957. The second half of the book, entitled "Backgrounds," is, with one exception, the work of the older literary generation. It is ironically appropriate that this second section should be bracketed with two stories by S. Y. Agnon. For though the seventy-four-year-old master of Hebrew fiction was nurtured in roughly the same cultural environment as the other writers of his generation, his moral and artistic concerns and his technical virtuosity lead him both further back and further forward than his close contemporaries; he is at once more distant than they and closer to the younger writers.

Every literature, of course, has more or less recognizable literary generations, usually defined by the inevitable movement of rebellion by the younger writers against the tastes, standards, and objectives of their immediate predecessors. But the literary situation in Israel is in some respects unique. To get an idea of the position in which a young Israeli novelist finds himself, one must imagine writers with the interests, say, of Malamud, Bellow, or Styron, setting out to create their novels of moral quest when their older contemporaries are people like Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne.

Though some qualification would have to be made, it is not misleading to think of the Hebrew literary generation now in its sixties as deriving from the same world as Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, and certainly Isaac Bashevis Singer. The typical Sabra

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* *A Whole Loaf: Stories from Israel*, edited by Sholom J. Kahn, Vanguard Press, 344 pp., $4.50.

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writer, on the other hand, has grown up in Mandatory Palestine in a socialist youth movement, worked for a while on a kibbutz, fought in the Israeli army and perhaps earlier in the British army, supported himself with a variety of odd jobs ranging from manual labor to journalism and high-school teaching. The limiting pressures of his native milieu thrust against—but do not mold—the contours of his personality: in most cases he has outgrown the Sabra's pose of toughness, his strident self-assertiveness, and is self-consciously attempting to overcome his provincialism. The writer's attitude toward the traditional Jewish life that used to exist in the Diaspora is not necessarily negative—as is often claimed—but is certainly unconcerned. East European Jewry, by and large, is simply beyond the horizons of his own life. The language he writes in is the language he has always spoken—a new Hebrew whose vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and idioms are often determined by its present-day speakers and whatever languages they have brought with them to Hebrew. This modern Hebrew, of course, takes advantage of linguistic resources from the Bible, the Talmud, the Midrash, even the prayer book, but a novelist who writes in it is as far away from the older stylists who model their language on tradition as Malamud's prose is from Fielding's.

A WHOLE LOAF gives a reasonably fair idea of the relative success or failure of Israeli writers in representing Israeli life, though some details of the picture suggested by the fifteen stories will have to be corrected. Except for certain peripheral areas the older writers are quite incapable of capturing the new accents and rhythms, the distinctive nuances in feeling and thought that characterize the contemporary Israeli scene. The younger writers, on the other hand, continue to fumble—with considerable intentness—for ways to bring their awareness of themselves and their culture into sharp literary focus.

Flipping through the "Backgrounds" section of *A Whole Loaf,* and thinking back over the novels located in Israel written by the older Hebrew writers (Agnon always excepted), I formulated the following rule-of-thumb: when an older Hebrew writer sets his narrative in Israel, he either succeeds by selecting an enclave of life in Israel which is not Israeli and therefore is in some sense familiar ground to him, or he fails by writing a story with such a thin social texture that it could fit almost anywhere, but nowhere in particular. The latter alternative is seductive to the many derivative writers in contemporary Hebrew letters; their imaginations seem principally engaged in imitating a literary model—or more often, an amalgam of models—rather than in transcribing real human problems in real human situations. Two painfully clear examples in the Kahn anthology are the stories by Yehuda Yaari and Yisraeli Zarchi; though both are set in Jerusalem, the only detectable local atmosphere is a certain odor of pulp magazines compounded with a mustiness of late 19th-century Continental fiction.

The success of the other strategy is attested by several stories of the older writers in *A Whole Loaf*. Pieces like Haim Hazaz's "The Lord Have Mercy," Yaakov Churgin's "Reb Shmelke of Safed," and Yehoshua Bar-Yosef's "The Lateborn" have a distinctive warmth and charm which should be familiar to anyone even casually acquainted with Yiddish literature. Like so many Yiddish stories, these examples of "Israeli" fiction have little plot, no tight structure, no crisis, moral or otherwise; they seem to stand apart from any main tradition of Western fiction. The stories are pleasantly ambling sketches of colorful folk types—and the types themselves are familiar in Yiddish literature: the long-suffering pure-hearted simpleton, the quixotic ne'er-do-well, the genuinely loving couple constantly at swords' ends. A writer does not have to have grown up in Eastern Europe in order to go in for this

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kind of Old World art. As a matter of fact, both Churgin and Bar-Yosef are native Palestinians; but Churgin was born at the turn of the century and Bar-Yosef, a decade younger, was raised in the old Orthodox community of Safed. There are abundant pockets of Old World life in Israel: whether they derive from Galicia or Lithuania or Yemen, they all have the same appeal of quaintness for the practicing "folk" artists and literary ethnologists among Hebrew writers.

THE CAREER OF Haim Hazaz, generally considered the most important of the older writers after Agnon, illustrates with paradigmatic clarity how the Old World oriented novelists have responded to the challenge of Israeli reality. Hazaz is a writer with great gifts for lyric description, for bold caricature, and for lively characterization. A good part of his earlier work concerns itself with the portrayal of colorful figures from the East European *shtetl.* Later, as a resident of Palestine and Israel, Hazaz began to devote his abundant energies to his portraits—the word is inevitable with such a writer—of Yemenite Jewry, both in Yemen (the *Yaish* trilogy) and in Israel (*Mori Said,* available in an English translation by Ben Halpern). The transition, of course, was not from Diaspora to Israel, but from one kind of Jewish folk-material to another. When Hazaz tries to deal with the more characteristic aspects of modern Israel (as in the volume of stories, *A Belt of Constellations,* published in 1958), his work is much flatter and suffers more obviously from ideological tendentiousness. Hebrew critics like to praise Hazaz for his "vivid depiction of the life of the Yemenites." To an American critic this is likely to seem a rather limited and anachronistic achievement in the middle of the 20th century. To a young Israeli writer, it is likely to seem that way, too. In any case, the older writers who spend their energies on quaint and loving portraits of quaint and lovable types can teach the young novelist nothing about how to render his own problematic world.

A young Israeli setting out to be a writer is confronted with a further difficulty—or at least annoyance—from which creative artists in the West are comparatively free. While he is doing his best simply to probe with honesty and intelligence the reality in which he finds himself, something more is often expected from him—by many critics, by older writers, by the press, by educators, by his party, by the regime. Modern Hebrew literature, from its beginnings in Central and Eastern Europe, was to a great extent publicistic in nature; by the latter half of the 19th century, it had become the handmaiden of nationalism for many Jews: Ahad Ha'am in the Odessa of the 90's could feel justified in rejecting for publication in his *Hashiloach* some fine lyric poems by Bialik because they did nothing to heighten national consciousness. It is hardly surprising that in an Israel of the Age of Ideology there are circles—often the product, in fact, of Ahad Ha'am's cultural nationalism—that preserve this quasi-propagandistic notion of the function of literature.

The persistence of such an attitude was made extremely clear by the furor raised over the publication in 1958 of S. Yizhar's long novel about the Israeli-Arab War, *The Days of Ziklag.* Though Yizhar's book suffers from some artistic uncertainty and too much verbiage, it is a strikingly revealing moral document. Yizhar's young soldiers, both in their interior monologues and in their lengthy discussions, lay bare all the pained questionings and radical self-doubts of sensitive Israeli youth: about the significance of statehood, about their Jewishness and their cultural future, about the existence of any certain values by which they can live. While the novel had many enthusiastic defenders, particularly among the younger intellectuals, it was denounced by most of the older critics as "cynical" or "nihilistic," and it was turned down for the coveted Bialik Prize largely because, as one of the judges asserted, it "betrayed" the brave Israeli youth that

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had fought in the War of Independence.

There is, moreover, little indication that this demand for good Zionists and good Jews in Hebrew literature has relented since 1958. Just this April, at the festive twentieth convention of the Hebrew Writers' Association, the younger novelists and poets found themselves assaulted from two sides. The convention began with a message from Ben Gurion which sharply criticized Hebrew writers for their lack of social responsibility, for their indifference to the great national effort of Israel's ingathering of exiles. Then Haim Hazaz, in the opening address, castigated with equal vehemence both the younger writers for turning their backs on the riches of Jewish tradition and the Israeli public for its lack of interest in Hebrew books.

IT IS TRUE that literature in Israel must struggle to keep its own footing in the tide of translated culture that floods its relatively tiny reading audience. But it is also true that the indigenous literature of Israel often seems pale and uninteresting not because its writers have failed to be loyally Israeli or authentically Jewish, but because they have not yet found adequate ways to be themselves in literature. The problem is not that "there is nothing really authentic about you or the life you lead," in the words of the protagonist of one story in *A Whole Loaf,* but that the younger Israeli writers are only beginning to discover coherent literary forms for their lives.

One fact that is clear about the novels and stories of this younger generation is that their authors are honestly trying to find what they can or should expect of themselves instead of attempting to write what others may expect of them. For example, there is not the slightest echo of patriotic drum-beating among their stories in *A Whole Loaf.* In the "Wars and Independence" section, each of the younger writers finds that war tests traditional values and brings moral ambivalences or conflicting allegiances into high tension; and much the same moral tenor is found in their authors' longer works. One finds the characteristic tone in the battle-hour reflections of the protagonist in "The Living and the Dead," an excerpt from S. Yizhar's first novel, *The Grove on the Hill*:

> . . . you remember that there are others like you and they haven't forgotten you, and the job you're doing and your own life are part and parcel of the big undertaking, and so on and so forth; and yet for some reason these are only fine phrases that are far from the truth. For the heart feels sour, so sour, far beyond any supposed deeds of daring, beyond sacrifice or all kinds of things; and you have to hide this well, because you're among people who believe in and look up to you. . . .

The passage illustrates both the moral integrity and the artistic weakness which characterize the work of Yizhar and his close contemporaries. One often has the feeling that these writers—particularly when they move beyond the short story to the novel—are unable yet to establish a necessary distance between themselves and their narrative. In their intent desire to grapple with their own moral problems, they frequently neglect the artistic demands of fiction, so that instead of structured novels with individualized characters and realized social settings, they are likely to end up with long, amorphous dialogues or monologues in which faceless voices crying out in a void discuss the moral dilemmas which beset the writers. Yizhar, who is probably the most talented and is certainly the most ambitious of the younger novelists, still suffers from this tendency to slide into formlessness; eleven years after *The Grove on the Hill,* it persists as the chief weakness of *The Days of Ziklag,* despite the strands of leitmotif with which he tries to hold together the twelve hundred pages of his later novel.

It is worth noting in this respect that of the fiction included in *A Whole Loaf,* Yizhar's piece is the only one—again with the exception of Agnon's stories—that shows any experimenting with literary form. While it would be silly to want

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or expect Israeli fiction to be particularly avant-garde, the timidity or indifference of the younger writers in exploring the medium in which they work results in their failure to develop an original style. And this is to say that none of the writers has adequately reproduced in language the distinctive texture of the world around him. Yizhar comes closest to doing so, but as the passage quoted from "The Living and the Dead" indicates, he does not seem to have really worked out what he wants to do technically with the stream-of-consciousness form, or rather, with the rough approximation of it which he uses. The presumable justification for his blurring of syntactical connections, his redundancies, his sprawling, ungainly sentences, is that this is the way people think. But, in fact, Yizhar's sentences are far too conversational, too much like slack monologue.

The Days of Ziklag, impressive a book as it is for what it has to say, similarly put off many intelligent readers in Israel by its awkward manner. The long interior monologues are sometimes so amorphous, and so undifferentiated from one character to the next, that one has to look back to the beginning of the chapter to recall who is supposed to be thinking. Yizhar is particularly effective in reproducing the impact of fear and the weight of boredom upon a soldier's awareness, and he shows real virtuosity in his detailed lyric descriptions of natural settings. However, he will have to develop a more disciplined and resourceful technique to carry out his intentions as a novelist.

THE TWO NAMES of the younger generation most often mentioned with—or after—Yizhar's are Moshe Shamir and Nathan Shaham. Each is represented in *A Whole Loaf* by a well-told war story, though Shamir's piece is flawed at points by melodramatic clichés. In their longer narratives, both Shamir and Shaham have suffered from the typical failure to achieve sufficient artistic distance from what they were writing. *That You Are Naked* (1958), one of the most recent novels of the prolific Shamir, illustrates this general weakness with great clarity. The novel is meant to present a young Israeli trying to define himself as an individual against the pressures of a group—in this case, his youth movement. Like a number of novels by the younger writers in Israel (including Yizhar's major work), all the principal characters are adolescents: they are precisely at the age of confused seeking and frequent self-definition. The hero of *That You Are Naked* is the most thinly-veiled autobiographical figure: his name is Moshe Avni (both *Shamir* and *Avni* suggest "stone" in Hebrew); he was born in the same year as Shamir; like his author, he has grown up in Tel Aviv and is a member of a left-wing youth movement. Moshe Avni, moreover, takes frequent pains to remind the reader what his story is all about: "With desperate persistence we are searching for ourselves, as though we were seeking a sanction for our existence, as though without some sanction we would be thrown out into the cold." This slow-moving, repetitious book reads more like a personal declaration of independence than a novel; there is little evidence that the young novelist has made as yet the subtle but crucial distinction between life and literature.

The Poor Man's Wisdom (1960), Nathan Shaham's latest novel, offers a somewhat different illustration of precisely the same failing. There is nothing obviously autobiographical about Shaham's novel, but again the writer is bent on the pursuit of his own existential problems to the manifest neglect of the novelistic demands of his book. The protagonist of *The Poor Man's Wisdom* is a Polish Jew who has devoted his life to the Communist party. Finally disillusioned with the party, he escapes to Israel in the hours of grace in 1956 and goes to live on a kibbutz. Through a long series of unwieldy flashbacks, through repeated discussion and debate with his old party friends and

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with kibbutzniks, he ponders the problem of individual conscience within a party discipline, the difficulty of the intellectual in adapting to communal life and manual labor, the force of moral obligations outside the sphere of political activity. In all this earnest but somewhat tedious dialectic, elements like plot and character receive only the most perfunctory attention, and again one feels that the book is not quite a novel.

ONE MIGHT EXPECT that the younger Israeli writers would turn for help in their technical difficulties to the one major creative figure of the older generation, S. Y. Agnon. Yet the fact is that Agnon, at least until very recently, has had no appreciable impact upon them. The reasons for his lack of influence are clear. However profound his artistic vision may be, it is also highly idiosyncratic, intimately connected with his own background and personality. Agnon's stylized, traditional Hebrew is, as I noted, centuries removed from the language of the Sabras, and his imagination was nourished in a Galician study house, not on a collective farm in the Negev or in a war against the Arabs.

Nevertheless, there are some significant points of contact between Agnon's world and that of the native Israeli writers. Like them, he is essentially concerned with moral issues; that is to say, at the center of his work stands an individual who is continually faced with critical choices or imperatives. And Agnon, for all his attachment to tradition, often reveals a disturbed sense of ambivalence toward values about which tradition or society claims to be sure. His great theme of radical homelessness even provides a specific parallel to the sense of disinheritance and moral isolation which makes itself felt in much of the writing of the younger generation. Yitzhak Kummer, the doomed outsider torn apart between two worlds in Agnon's *Not Long Ago,* is no less an Isaac bound for a meaningless immolation than the soldiers in *The Days of Ziklag* or the young socialists in *That You Are Naked.* (All three novels use the Binding of Isaac as a central motif.)

Even apart from his affinities in outlook, it seems almost inevitable that Agnon's fertile symbolic imagination and fine control of tone and style would eventually tempt the young Hebrew writers to borrow and even to imitate. Three recent pieces of Hebrew fiction suggest the possibility that Agnon's influence may prove to be more fruitful than anyone has yet guessed. Yehuda Amichai's *In This Terrible Wind* (1961), Yoram Kaniuk's *The Acrophile* (published in English in 1961—the Hebrew original has not yet appeared), and Aharon Meged's *As It Happeneth to the Fool* (1959) make use in varying degree of Agnonesque effects and techniques, particularly those that come from the rich anti-realist and symbolic vein of Agnon's work.

In This Terrible Wind is the most radically experimental and also by far the most uneven of the three books. Amichai, who has acquired a reputation as a poet in the last few years, attempts in this volume of stories to apply some of the methods of poetry to first-person narrative. Many of the longer stories wander unsteadily through a plotless, characterless vacuum, but a few of the shorter pieces are quite striking. One is tempted to describe Amichai's world as surrealistic, but it would be more accurate to say that reality is essentially metaphorical for him: people become metaphors and metaphors become people, every element of experience demands a symbolic reading. Amichai diligently explores the possibilities of each passing comparison. "[When the war was over] we scattered like papers after the elections, in every direction. Only the dead were cast into the dark ballot box, only they influenced what would be." And he finds tongues in trees, sermons in stones, and, generally, gloom in everything.

> When I drew near [the sickbed], I heard the great oxygen bomb whispering. It

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used to be that an angel stood by the beds of the sick. Now there are bombs filled with whispering oxygen. Divers and pilots are also given oxygen tanks. Where will my father go? Maybe he'll dive, maybe he'll climb. Anyway, he'll leave us.

This sort of brooding over the mysteries of metaphor sometimes occurs in Agnon, though it is certainly never given such free rein. Be that as it may, the entire dreamlike mode of narration of *In This Terrible Wind* is in some degree inspired by the expressionistic stories of Agnon's *Book of Deeds*. Though Amichai's touch is often unsure, he has made a brave attempt to create a new kind of story which can serve as an artistically coherent expression of his own inner world.

YORAM KANIUK, on the other hand, has a firmer grasp of his method: *The Acrophile* is a spare but skillfully managed novel. It also gives evidence of considerable technical indebtedness to Agnon. Kaniuk's tone is often reminiscent of his: it has many of the same resonances, even much the same pace, the same quiet control, ranging from wry humor to muted lyricism. This, for example, is the way Kaniuk conveys the pain of separateness of a couple who will soon be divorced.

Mira remained silent. I put my arms around her and tried to kiss her. She was cold. I let her go, feeling like a fool. Two strangers, we walked together through the morning chill, the play of wind and trees, the game of the yellow leaves on the sidewalk.

And this is how Agnon, in "Metamorphosis," one of the stories included in *A Whole Loaf*, presents the same emotion in a couple who have just been divorced.

The sun was about to set. In the fields the wheat swayed silently, and the sunflowers gazed one-eyed out of their darkening yellow faces. Hartmann stretched his hand out into the vacant air and caressed Toni's shadow.

Some of the situations and symbols in *The Acrophile* also distinctly call Agnon to mind. The protagonist of *The Acrophile* is involved in the symbolically significant work of piecing together "the language of the black cave people," just as Adiel Amzeh in Agnon's "Forevermore" (COMMENTARY, August 1961) is trying to reconstruct the ancient civilization of Gumlidata, and just as Dr. Ginat in Agnon's longer story, "Ido and Einam," unearths the two archaic languages which provide the link "between the very beginnings of history and what preceded." Or again, when Kaniuk's Daan locks himself out of his apartment on his wedding day and all circumstances conspire against his getting back in, readers of Agnon will recall the similarly archetypal situation in *The Book of Deeds*. With all this, I do not mean to imply that Kaniuk is a derivative writer, merely that he appears to have borrowed a little and learned a great deal from the older Hebrew novelist.

Agnon's influence on Aharon Meged is more tangential, perhaps no more than awakening him to the possibilities of adopting a Kafkaesque narrative to Hebrew fiction and Israeli reality. In any case, *As It Happeneth to the Fool* derives much more clearly from Kafka than from Agnon. The presence of the German writer in fact makes itself felt with awkward obtrusiveness in the first section of Meged's novel. The nameless protagonist is invited by somebody called "B." to a meeting of the Society of Evildoers; after he has been laughed out of the meeting for claiming he has a conscience, he tries desperately to win acceptance from the Society, but his efforts end in a shattering fiasco when he tumbles from the lofty scaffolding where he was to give a speech on the Society's behalf. As Meged works further into his novel, the symbolic machinery creaks less, and the protagonist who began as a pawn in a Kafkaesque chess game turns out to be a rather believable *homme moyen moral* involved in an absorbing struggle against both the pressures of conformity from without and the limpness of his own timidity.

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IT IS SIGNIFICANT that Meged, in following Kafka's conception of the novel as a moral fable, manages in the end to get across a much sharper sense than his more conventional colleagues of the distinctive reality of present-day Israel. Perhaps he owes part of his success to the entrenched bureaucratic way of life in modern socialist Israel. Kafka, of course, was himself a bureaucrat (as is the hero of *As It Happeneth to the Fool*), and the kind of novel he created reflects in many ways the peculiar character of this experience. In a bureaucracy, people have initials instead of names. In a bureaucracy—as anyone who has ever dealt with Israeli officialdom certainly knows—the individual is at the mercy of a madly confused machine in which no part accepts ultimate responsibility and from which on occasion inscrutable decrees are issued without warning or possibility of revocation. For an Israeli, there could be no more appropriate image for Judgment Day than the one offered by Meged's novel: an obdurate tax-examiner, clutching the dossier that contains the protagonist's entire adult life, seems literally to hold the hero's fate in his unrelenting hands.

The case of *As It Happeneth to the Fool* could be particularly instructive to the writers we have been considering. While borrowing generously from a European writer, Meged has not been solely imitative and, in fact, has managed to invoke and explore his own national climate with considerable fidelity. The small strip of Hebrew-speaking culture at the east end of the Mediterranean does not have to be engulfed by the imposing cultural blocs of the West. At the present, there are at least a few hopeful indications that the new Israeli fiction may be developing its own distinctive voices.

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GEORGE LICHTHEIM

WEST GERMANY TODAY

IT TAKES ONLY AN hour and a half for the plane to carry one from London to West Germany: time enough for an adjustment to one's usual perspective. Britain and Germany are partners in NATO and may become associates in the European Common Market, but the visitor is conscious of stepping into a different fragment of the international jigsaw puzzle. Germany, unlike England, is not a normal country; perhaps not a real country at all. It is after all divided. Part of the nation lives on the other side of the Iron Curtain. One may lecture the Germans upon the undoubted truth that this circumstance is something they have brought upon themselves, and which the seventeen million in the East German "Democratic Republic" share with the inhabitants of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Still the answer comes back: "Yes, but our country is cut in two." It did not need the Berlin crisis to make the fifty-three million in the Federal Republic conscious of this fact.

The plane settles on the runway, which by virtue of its geographical location is also "a center of world interest." The traveler steps out—and back into the past. West Germany today is a small-scale replica of the Weimar Republic. Or so it seems at first sight. If the visitor was once himself a German citizen with memories of pre-Hitler times, he experiences a dreamy sense of having wandered through the Looking Glass into a universe where everything is at once familiar and curiously out of focus. The old Germany is still there, but overlaid with a fascinating modernity. What was considered risky and daring in Weimar days, thirty years earlier, is now accepted as normal. Political institutions, economic life, social habits, architecture, automobiles, clothes, and fashions, have all been remodeled to suit the standard international way of life. Airports and railway stations recall Idlewild and Grand Central; fabrics and furnishings are copies from Scandinavian designs; the press is ardently democratic and self-consciously cosmopolitan; the theater dominated by Brecht, Anouilh, and Tennessee Williams; the young generation affects the current international youth style, down to its modish extravagances. To a visitor coming from England—now undergoing a similar upheaval—it seems that West Germany is a step ahead: as indeed the economic indicators would seem to suggest.

Beneath the surface glitter and the industrial boom—now slowing down a little, but still breathtaking by British standards—lies a Germany which has at last caught up with its own economic transformation: something the Weimar Republic never did. In some respects it suggests a self-conscious imitation of the United States;

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in others—be it said without intention to hurt anyone's feelings—a large-scale replica of Belgium. This latter impression is especially strong in the Catholic Rhineland, which now for the first time in modern German history sets the tone; but it is not totally absent elsewhere. It persists even in Protestant and socialist Hamburg, still one of the world's great shipping centers, except that here the corresponding parallel would be with postwar Holland. There are parts of Southern Germany, notably Württemberg, which traditionally have close ties with neighboring Switzerland or Alsace, and where the population speaks the same Alemanic dialect. There are the northern provinces which border on Denmark and are close to Scandinavia in style. What is lacking in the Federal Republic is the heritage of Prussia. Neither in Bonn—that curiously parochial capital city, which was meant to be provisional and has become permanent—nor in the various *Laender,* does the visitor feel that the Prussian tradition is still alive. And the Reich—Bismarck's Reich which came to an end only in 1945—pivoted on Prussia.

II

Der Spiegel, that lively but often malicious and sometimes irresponsible weekly periodical which—as Germans point out with pride—has successfully copied the *Time* formula, has for years been running a campaign against Konrad Adenauer, on the grounds that this born Rhinelander is fundamentally indifferent to the cause of German unity. Following the Federal elections of September 17, 1961, *Der Spiegel* redoubled its efforts with a series of quasi-historical essays seeking to establish that Adenauer has always envisaged Germany's European role in terms derived from his own Catholic-conservative Rhineland commitments. Even his brief advocacy of a Rhineland republic in 1919 was dragged out again, though without the usual implication that he had then favored the French project for separating the Rhineland from the Reich. Somewhat grudgingly it was conceded that he and his friends, in those days immediately following the First World War, merely tried to dismantle Prussia and establish a West German state within a federalized Germany. Still, Adenauer's rooted dislike of Prussia and the Prussian tradition—going back to before the First World War, when Imperial Germany was ruled by a Protestant dynasty—was invoked in support of the thesis that he never really cared for German unity after 1945. Even his interest in the freedom of Berlin was held to be lukewarm. There is today in West Germany a climate of opinion which nourishes the suspicion that Adenauer would not have been heartbroken if in 1945 the whole of the former Reich capital had come under Soviet control.

Superficially there is some evidence for this view, which has its partisans among Social Democrats as well as on the political Right. The story of Adenauer's rise to power in the fragmented Germany of 1945–49 is complicated, but at every step it is marked by his determination not to let control go once more to those centralist forces which in 1918–19 retained Prussia in existence and wrecked his own plans for a federal form of government. He won his fight first within his own party, the Christian-Democratic Union, and later against the threatened coalition of the Social Democrats and the Right. Possibly against his original intentions, the consequence of this orientation was to shift the geographical center of the Federal Republic so far west as to make Berlin a mere frontier outpost. When the first West German Bundestag convened in 1949, the Socialists pressed hard for Frankfort rather than Bonn as the temporary capital. Adenauer resisted, and won his fight because most of the smaller groups preferred his leadership to that of the S.P.D. leader, Kurt Schumacher. Even so it was a narrow victory. When the Bundestag had to choose the Federal Republic's first Chancellor, Adenauer won

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by a single vote—his own. No one knows how much this outcome was influenced by his publicly expressed conviction that the former Prussian capital was no longer suitable as the governing seat of a reunified Reich, "quite irrespective of who is in occupation of Berlin and the East."

None of this had been entirely forgotten by his opponents when on August 13, 1961, the Ulbricht regime in East Berlin rang down the Iron Curtain with a crash. During the five weeks between this event and the Federal elections of September 17, both the Social Democrats and the nationalist Right did what they could to impugn the credentials of Adenauer and his CDU/CSU. The "total failure" of the Chancellor's foreign policy was dragged out at every meeting, and the argument was usually capped by a hint that Bonn had never really cared very much for Berlin and German unity. When the votes were counted, the CDU/CSU was still the largest party, but both the Socialists and the nationalist Free Democrats had made striking gains, and Adenauer had lost his absolute majority.

In the electoral post-mortems, the term "right wing" was carefully avoided by most commentators, German and foreign. The Free Democrat party, which increased its strength by 50 per cent to gain four million votes out of some thirty million cast altogether, was described as "liberal." The conventions of German postwar life encourage a certain degree of polite verbiage where groups with conservative and nationalist tendencies are concerned. Thus the news that the avowedly right-wing parties had collapsed was noted as a sign of growing stability, while the fact that their votes were transferred to the "liberal" FDP did not harm the latter in the eyes of most commentators. Why after all should one mourn if traditionally right-wing voters gave their support to a party with an impeccably liberal-democratic platform, and a leadership committed to Western values? If in villages and small towns, the same people who had once supported the old nationalist Right now voted for an ostensibly liberal party, while privately cherishing their old grudges and prejudices, was this something to be alarmed about? Did it not rather signify that traditional conservative nationalism (not to mention National Socialism) was on the way out?

THE REALITY IS a little more complicated. The FDP is a peculiarly German party in that its liberalism is the counterpart of a deeply rooted nationalism. To talk of camouflage would be unfair. Inasmuch as they fervently believe in free enterprise and the rule of law, the Free Democrats may legitimately lay claim to the liberal label, the more so since they do have a genuinely democratic wing which is nourished by old anti-Prussian and anti-militarist grudges. They can also be said to be fairly enlightened in cultural matters, with even here and there a tinge of anti-clericalism. It must be remembered that West Germany is rather tightly balanced between Catholics and Protestants, and that many people who politically are not on the Left nonetheless dislike the Catholic preponderance within Adenauer's own party. On divorce, birth control, and similar subjects, the FDP has occasionally sided with the Socialists. But there are deeper levels within a party which in some respects has inherited the tradition of Stresemann's old National Liberals. German liberalism has always been predominantly nationalist and committed to a unified and centralized Reich. The federalist and democratic Southern wing forms a minority. This situation has not changed. And there is something else: the FDP has now inherited the legacy of those conservative-nationalist groups which no longer find an outlet at the parliamentary level. It has thereby become the—possibly unwilling—legatee of all those tendencies in German life which were once associated with Bismarck's policy of "balancing" between Russia and the West, and subsequently with the rather amateurish efforts in the

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same direction made by the Weimar Republic, and finally by Hitler.

How far is German nationalism still an active force, and to what extent is it focused not just on German unification, but on the recovery of the lost provinces? These questions cannot be answered simply by analyzing election results or opinion polls. Public opinion itself is subject to political currents set up outside Germany. It suffered a heavy shock on August 13, when the Iron Curtain came down in Berlin, while the West remained passive. It may soon have to digest even heavier disillusionments. By taking the successors of the old nationalists into the government, Adenauer guarded himself against fire from this flank, leaving it to the Social Democrats to carry the banner of resistance to his policies. But parliamentary tactics do not supply an answer to the question how the public is going to react if *Wiedervereinigung* is finally shown to be a hopeless dream.

What of the Left? For years the Social Democrats concentrated their fire on Adenauer's foreign policy. They posed as the champions of German unity at almost any price, and accused the Chancellor of making this aim conditional on the strengthening of NATO. As late as 1959 —the year in which they dropped the remnants of socialism from their program and came forward as converts to free enterprise and the market economy—they put forward a comprehensive "Plan for Germany" envisaging progressive disengagement in Central Europe, somewhat on the lines suggested by George Kennan. The project was scuttled by its authors after the failure of the 1960 "Summit Conference" in Paris, since when the Social Democrats—now led by Willy Brandt of Berlin—have in fact become converts to Adenauer's policy of putting NATO first. This has not prevented them from affirming that the Chancellor's policy has failed; as indeed it has, if one assumes that its purpose was to bring about the unification of Germany rather than the establishment of a viable Western Europe.

The Social Democrats, however, are inhibited by the traditions of their party from taking the straight nationalist line. They are after all profoundly pro-Western and democratic: more so indeed than any other organized body of opinion in Germany. Revulsion against Adenauer's failure to bring about the unification of Germany goes deepest in quarters which were never really touched by loyalty to the West or to the cause of Franco-German reconciliation. It would be wrong to identify these currents with the whole of that Protestant middle class which on September 17, 1961, gave its support to the national-liberal FDP: but the convergence of the national and the religious issue has undoubtedly created a potentially dangerous focus of opposition to the aged Chancellor, now clearly nearing the end of his long tenure of power. Its strength was visible and audible during the weeks after the election. There were underground rumblings not only among the opposition groups, but in Adenauer's own party: significantly they came from the North, where the CDU draws its strength from Evangelical and conservative strata not entirely immune to the siren songs of the old Right. But for the unwavering support of the Catholic hierarchy and his own Rhineland supporters—who include Catholic union leaders as well as bankers and heavy industry—the Chancellor could not have weathered the storm.

BEHIND THESE TENSIONS lies the ancient ambivalence of German nationalism where the West is concerned. It has not yet been clearly demonstrated that the German middle class has been finally cured of its love-hate relationship with Western Europe. Certainly the universities are once more the breeding ground of nationalist student fraternities, and anyone familiar with German history must suspect that the ideologies preached in these circles —and among the remnants of the old romantic youth movement, now once more

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growing in numbers and influence—have not radically changed. German nationalism has traditionally repudiated the liberal values, and substituted for them the cult of blood and soil, folk and Reich. It is a fantasy to suppose that the National Socialists invented this mystique: they merely exploited it and made it official. The extent to which it still persists cannot be measured by the publication figures of newspapers, magazines, or novels. The literary avant-garde in Western Germany is almost desperately pro-Western, democratic, and pacifist. But the same avant-garde has a tendency to look upon itself as a minority engaged in fighting an enemy whose real strength is difficult to gauge: most of the iceberg is under water. All one can say is that the "European" consciousness does not seem to have gone very deep, except here and there among the youth. Europe is accepted, but without much enthusiasm. It has become a substitute for the Reich that was lost in the national catastrophe, but it is not yet a spiritual homeland.

There is an apparent paradox in this picture of a country whose surface resembles Western Europe at its stodgiest and most philistine, while its depths seem to harbor not a few monsters of the past. The old French distinction between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* may be helpful here. There is no question that official Germany has made its choice, and that this choice is a pro-Western one. Whether the nation has really been transformed in its depths by the catastrophe of 1945 is another question. The intellectual elite has its doubts about its own countrymen; the rest of the world is well advised to take these doubts seriously.

In some respects West Germany remains an enigma. The Communist party is banned, but Brecht is a favorite playwright, and Marx has become a university classic whose works appear in standard editions alongside Kant, Goethe, and Thomas Aquinas. There are no official relations with East Germany or even with Poland, but trade with the Eastern bloc is flourishing, and businessmen are known to dream aloud about the Chinese market. Nazism is taboo, but the Third Reich has become a myth among a not unimportant section of the younger generation. Anti-Semitism is illegal, but few observers doubt that its heritage has sunk in. Bonn is foremost in preaching the complete integration of Western Europe and the ending of national sovereignty, but not many Europeans are ready to trust the Germans with atomic weapons, lest they make a sudden lunge eastward. Public life is dull, parochial, and distinguished by a most untraditional moderation and milksoppiness: beneath this reasurring surface the old national-romantic mythology continues to rumble in countless scattered leagues, fraternities, and obscure publications. Pan-Germanism gives every appearance of being an extinct volcano. Time will show how much fire there is still under the ashes.

III

BONN IS NOT AN attractive place, nor does its political scenery appeal to the connoisseur. In the days of the French Fourth Republic, when tourists were nightly taken to the visitors' gallery of the Palais Bourbon "to watch the government fall," it was remarked by the habitués that half a dozen German governments could at any moment have been formed with ease from the back-benchers of the French Assembly. There was in Paris at least an endless supply of talent: indeed too much for stability, since at least half the six hundred deputies were "ministerial timber," and a good fifty had cause to regard themselves as the equals of whoever happened to be Prime Minister at the moment. No one could accuse the West German Bundestag of harboring an excessive number of political prima donnas, or of being dominated by outstanding personalities. The mark of German public life in the postwar era has been competence rather than brilliance. There are few genuinely impressive figures, and those

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few belong mostly to an older generation which somehow survived the slaughter Hitler inflicted on the pre-war elites. To understand West Germany one must bear in mind that its traditions were shattered, and its political leadership groups decimated, by a catastrophe without parallel in Western European history. If today's leading actors strike the observer who still remembers the Weimar Republic as somewhat drab, it is only fair to recall that some of them are the survivors of concentration camps, while the majority are drawn from those second-ranking figures who outlasted the Third Reich because they were not prominent enough to be persecuted (or to compromise themselves). Adenauer's dominance over his own party is largely explicable in these simple terms: he was the one major Catholic politician of the pre-Hitler period who not only survived, but who had the physical and mental energy to conduct a ruthless organizational drive against actual and potential rivals. It tells one something about the Federal Republic that this stubborn old man, who in Weimar days was known chiefly as Mayor of Cologne, should have come to loom like a colossus over the political scene: though only the naivest of foreigners have ventured to compare him to Bismarck.

To Germans of all parties, aware of their country's history and the relative standing of its personalities, such a comparison seems absurd, even hilarious. To do him justice, Adenauer himself has not encouraged it, realizing full well that it would strike his countrymen as repellent. His position within the portrait gallery of Germany's Catholic and conservative leaders during the past century—from Bismarck's arch-opponent, Windthorst, to the last-but-one Chancellor of the Weimar Republic, von Papen—is secure, and he need not worry about the abuse that was bound to be the lot of anyone who had to lead the Germans from the wreckage of their past to the less picturesque but more secure and civilized conditions of contemporary Europe. If his opponents have a genuine complaint against the Chancellor, it is that he has avoided telling his countrymen the truth about their position in a Europe which Hitler helped to wreck beyond repair. He has preferred to let the realization sink in by stages, meanwhile enabling his shattered country to recover at least a normal way of life and a surprising degree of prosperity. If there was a chance of bringing the facts home to the Germans on the morrow of their defeat, it was not taken. Perhaps the newly elected first Bundestag of 1949 had such an opportunity: a solemn declaration, backed by all parties, that the Germans considered their old eastern frontier lost beyond repair in consequence of Hitler's war, might have impressed both the East Europeans and the Germans themselves with the Federal Republic's determination to make a fresh start. The opportunity was let slip, doubtless for compelling reasons: there were ten million expellees whose feelings (and votes) could not be ignored, and tens of thousands of old unreconstructed National Socialists who would have screamed treason. Besides, it was (and still is) argued by would-be realists that formal renunciation of the eastern lands requires a suitable *quid pro quo* on Poland's part. This is the kind of argument that professional diplomats regard as persuasive. Its foolishness has now been amply demonstrated, for Poland is in no mood to argue about the Oder-Neisse line, and the Western Allies are becoming increasingly restive over the Federal Republic's obstinate refusal to recognize the obvious. It is likewise evident that by failing to make peace with Poland, Bonn has greatly facilitated the Soviet propaganda campaign against "West German militarism and revanchism."

YET THOSE WHO now blame the West Germans for not making a spectacular gesture, while at the same time praising Adenauer for leading his country back to democracy, are caught in a contradiction:

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a dramatic renunciation would have gone entirely against the fundamental attitude of the Bonn regime, an attitude characterized by the Walpolean slogan: "Let sleeping dogs lie." If Adenauer has nursed his half-crazed country back to something resembling sanity and civilized behavior, he has done it largely by casting himself in the role of the old family doctor who is called in after the patient has tried to cut his throat. The occasion, he would have said, was not one for inflaming the convalescent with dramatic statements. What was needed was a prolonged period of rest, supplemented by an adequate diet and brief homilies on the importance of keeping calm. Impassioned talk about the fearful consequences of doing nothing was likely to bring on a relapse into the old dangerous mood. In pursuing this regime for thirteen years, Adenauer has clearly achieved his primary aim, which was to make the Germans feel they were no longer regarded as outcasts. What he has failed to accomplish is an awareness that the old Germany is gone forever, and that even the chances of German unity are exceedingly slim. He has, in short, preferred not to tell the patient the whole awful truth about his suicide attempt and its consequences.

Because of the equivocal nature of this recovery, the West German public now finds itself unequipped to deal with the consequences of Germany's new status in Europe. Between the facts known to the politicians, and the beliefs held by the voters, there yawns a gap even larger than is normally the case in a democracy. In this respect there is little to choose between the political parties, for the Socialists—and the neutralist wing of the Free Democrats—for years nursed the illusion that German unity could be had for the asking. Specifically, it was asserted that all the Germans had to do, if they wanted their country to be unified "in peace and freedom," was to get out of NATO. The collapse of this illusion, followed by the discovery that the West was unable to alter the status quo in Berlin and East Germany, has pulled the rug from under all the parties; for while the opposition's lack of realism has been shown up, so has the hollowness of the official assurance that the West would gradually become strong enough to drive the Russians out of East Germany *without war:* an illusion shared even by Social Democrats like the former Mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter. Only now in 1962 is it beginning to dawn upon most Germans that the division of their country may become permanent. Not surprisingly there are signs of revolt. So far, the Bonn coalition has held together—largely because Adenauer has been able to incorporate the nationalist tendencies within it, thereby rendering them harmless. What is going to happen under his successor—whether his name is Erhard, Strauss, or Brandt—is a question of a different order. The end of the Adenauer era is bound to coincide with the arrival on the scene of a generation less bound to the aged Chancellor's political philosophy.

THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES of this state of affairs must inevitably be discussed in terms of personalities. This is an awkward matter, for, as noted above, West Germany is not rich in outstanding figures. For a country of its size and importance it is remarkably ill provided with statesmen of national, let alone European, stature. The secret of Adenauer's dominance lies as much in the mediocrity of his potential rivals as in his own undoubted political skill and strength of character. The majority of his colleagues are, by common consent, no more than able administrators. Of the two who are generally regarded as probable successors, the Bavarian party leader and Defense Minister, Franz-Josef Strauss, is widely distrusted as an ambitious and reckless politician with a taste for military adventurism; while the amiable and competent Ludwig Erhard, though popular as the chief architect of the "economic miracle," lacks mass appeal

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and has little political strength outside the business community. The Free Democrats, insofar as they do not pay respectful obeisance to an older liberalism in the person of Professor Heuss, seem to have thrown up a pushful and "managerial" type of political manipulator without much sense of tradition and style: their titular leader, Erich Mende, made himself ridiculous last year by first noisily proclaiming his refusal to serve under Adenauer, and then coming to heel. Nor are the Social Democrats much better supplied. Their "front bench"—Brandt, Wehner, Erler, Carlo Schmid—is respectable but not outstanding. The most one can say is that they look like being able to govern the Federal Republic, though hardly a unified Germany, should it ever come about.

The truth is that West Germany is a provincial country whose public life has somehow acquired a distinctly "Belgian" flavor. There is a curious gap between the (real or supposed) significance of the Berlin dispute and the style of West German (or for that matter East German) politics and journalism. A glance at the editorials in even the best of the daily papers, or an hour spent listening to Bundestag debates, is enough to convince anyone with a recollection of Germany's past that Hitler was successful in his drive to destroy the nation's political and intellectual elites. There is little fanaticism and almost no viciousness, but not much excitement either, and hardly any desire for a more stylish and less philistine form of public life. Someone like de Gaulle would be wholly inconceivable in this prosperous, complacent, and increasingly parochial society, which seems to have abandoned whatever taste for excellence it ever possessed, along with some less desirable characteristics. For the same reason there is not much danger of that suicidal upsurge with which some German propagandists are currently trying to frighten the West. On balance, demoralization seems more likely than suicidal mania, should the West Germans lose their trust in NATO. For every intellectual who dreams of another Russo-German pact, there are a hundred solid citizens who cling anxiously to their new existence while wondering whether it is really as stable as they had supposed it to be. The reasonable answer to those who fear that Bonn may "go neutralist and make a deal with Khrushchev" is that the West Germans as a people have probably passed the point of no return in their successful endeavor to become indistinguishable from their Dutch, Belgian, and Swiss neighbors. A relapse into more traditional attitudes is not impossible if the European situation should go really wrong, but the underlying pull seems to be against it.

IV

WHAT THAT PULL is based on, in terms of economic achievement, is evident to anyone who pays even a cursory visit to the Federal Republic, or who simply consults the relevant statistics. Comparisons with Britain are particularly instructive, for the Federal Republic and the United Kingdom have almost exactly the same population: around 53 million. The shares of the main sectors of the economy in the value of total output are also similar, except that West Germany has a larger agricultural sector. Apart from that, the two economies are even more alike in structure than they were before the war. It is therefore noteworthy that between 1950 and 1960 industrial production in West Germany increased by 125 per cent, in Britain by only 30 per cent. Since then the German boom has flattened out a bit, but it remains fair to say that the rise in gross national product since the war has been more rapid than in any other European country except Italy. Contrary to some current notions, German salaries and living standards are now catching up with British, while the social services are well developed. Other indices of progress include a vastly successful export drive and a 50 per cent rise in productivity (i.e.,

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ratio of output to manpower employed) since before the war. The fact that these achievements have their prime source in the disaster of 1945 imparts a certain grim irony to the total picture. Of the extra millions who joined the labor force less than half are accounted for by the gradual absorption of unemployed; the greater half came from East Germany, and their timely arrival made possible the constant expansion of the economy without inflation: in other words, they helped to keep wages low. Although this phase is now over—wages and salaries rose by 13 per cent in 1960 and by a further 10 per cent last year—it remains true that the postwar "economic miracle" was the counterpart of a population movement which between 1945 and 1960 drove twelve million Germans from the lands east of the Oder-Neisse, the Sudetenland, and the East German "Democratic Republic."

Against this background the much vaunted "economic miracle" loses some of its surprising features, though it doubtless took the characteristic German passion for work to make it possible. The significance of Dr. Erhard's "social market economy" in promoting the great expansion of productive capacity is debatable. It certainly stimulated business confidence, the more so since in practice it translated itself into tax incentives and trade liberalization. But wage and price stability, though extremely helpful, was clearly not the result of governmental policy alone: it reflected a balance of forces which for a time made it possible to promote economic expansion at the cost of social equality. The free-for-all worked, and in the end even made possible a rise in wages and a great expenditure on housing; but only because for a number of years trade union restraint was underpinned by an enormous pool of unemployed labor. Beyond that, the claims made on behalf of the "social market economy" are pretty dubious. France, with a very different economic policy based on central planning and a tolerated degree of price and wage inflation, did almost as well. Where Erhard scored was in making free enterprise and economic liberalism popular—for the first time in German history. Until 1945 a generalized dislike of laissez-faire had been pretty nearly universal in Germany, being as deeply ingrained on the Conservative Right as on the Socialist Left. One consequence of the *Wirtschaftswunder* is that the West Germans have now become belated converts to free enterprise and competition, though big business has remained as cartelized as ever.

ECONOMIC LIBERALISM, of course, is quite compatible with a tough authoritarianism in public (and private) life. Of this too the Federal Republic provides ample evidence, though perhaps no more so than some other parts of Western Europe. Once more one begins to wonder whether the long-run accomplishment of the Adenauer era will not turn out to have been the transformation of West Germany into a bigger and better Belgium. Yet to call this society "bourgeois" is to make a judgment that is both limited and misleading. In many respects, public and private life in present-day Germany—as in the West generally—has escaped the old bourgeois conventions. It is, for example, far less family-centered than it used to be, and the status of women has changed for the better. Moreover the social predominance of the manager class—again a common Western phenomenon—is something quite different from the 19th-century situation, which saw a prosperous but politically quiescent middle class uneasily wedged in between a dominant military-bureaucratic ruling stratum and a restive proletariat. The destruction of the old elite and the gradual erosion of the industrial proletariat in its familiar form have brought about a situation for which sociologists (in Germany and elsewhere) have not yet found a proper vocabulary. What can be said is that the new society seems to be both economically dynamic and socially stable, in that the former

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class tensions have largely disappeared. Their place is doubtless being taken by new ones, but for the moment all the political parties are to some extent operating in a void. The fact that the Social Democrats have virtually dropped the socialist part of their program, while continuing to attack the "social market economy" as a sham instituted for the benefit of the rich, is as indicative of this confusion as is the presence within the Christian Democratic ranks of a Catholic left wing which urges not merely the constant expansion of the welfare state, but the establishment of some form of "industrial democracy" or "workers' control in industry." (It was the pressure of this group which for a moment after the election caused Adenauer to toy with the notion of a "black-red" coalition with the SPD, thereby scaring the business community and its chosen instrument, the Free Democrat party, nearly out of their combined wits.)

Whether governed by the present Catholic-Liberal coalition or—as seems increasingly likely from 1965 onward—by a Socialist-Catholic alliance on the Austrian and Belgian model, West Germany seems fated to descend the slope which gradually leads to some form of the welfare state, with a mixed and partly planned economy to prop it up. A situation of this kind leaves few outlets for reforming energies in the economic field. The political and ideological struggles of the future thus appear likely to turn on matters of social and educational policy, on which the parties are divided by their fundamental philosophies rather than by the massive economic interests of their voters.

V

THERE IS JUST ONE thing which can still prevent West Germany from following this evolution to the end: the unsolved national problem and its constant exacerbation by the Russians and their East German satellites. But for the Berlin complex, the division of the country would by now probably have been tacitly accepted by the majority of West Germans. Berlin makes it impossible to come to terms with the fact of division and separation from "the seventeen millions in the East." It is the great question mark overhanging the life of the Federal Republic. Recent political squalls, consequent in part upon a much publicized quarrel between the Bonn Foreign Ministry and its ambassador in Moscow, have shown how much basic uncertainty over the country's future orientation persists even in impeccably liberal quarters: it was a former Free Democrat member of the government, the unquestionably liberal Dr. Dehler, who caused a public storm by seeming to advocate neutralism. If such notions are once more in the air, it is not exclusively the fault of propagandists who hark back to earlier examples of Russo-German cooperation. Part of the nervousness springs from a feeling that, after Adenauer is gone, the Russians may once again exploit the political naïveté of so many Germans.

Hence no doubt the current tug in Bonn between pro-British and pro-French factions who, in their different ways, want to make sure that the Federal Republic remains firmly committed to the West. Since de Gaulle recently made it clear that he regards Franco-German cooperation as the foundation stone of his own plans for making Western Europe independent of NATO, it has become rather embarrassing for people in Adenauer's entourage to have to admit that being on close terms with France may involve a loosening of the ties with Washington. Ideally, Bonn would like to be America's principal ally in Europe *and* France's chief partner in Europe. The next few months will show whether this is feasible. What can already be said with a fair degree of certainty is that there is not much place for Britain in the structure planned in Paris: not even if Whitehall—against American advice—agrees to share its nuclear "deterrent" with de Gaulle. The General is not anti-British;

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he merely does not believe that the British are "good Europeans," i.e., willing at a pinch to side with the Continent against the United States. He also suspects—probably rightly—that Mr. Kennedy is pushing the British into Europe because he wants to have a reliable ally there.

How does this affect the German situation? It is common knowledge that the German business community—represented in the cabinet by Erhard and the FDP ministers—basically shares the Anglo-American viewpoint, while Adenauer does not. Hence the leading Hamburg papers —one of them at least authentically liberal, the other conservative but pro-British —have recently been running a campaign against the Chancellor. The charge used to be that he did not care about German unity. He is now told—in public—that in his senile obstinacy he is undermining Germany's good relations with the United States; specifically, that he ought not to interfere with Mr. Kennedy's efforts to reach a settlement with the Russians over Berlin. Yet all concerned know quite well that what is at stake is the *de facto* recognition of East Germany, which in turn means the formal acceptance of partition. Moreover, neither the British nor the French are really opposed to this. Why then the row? The fact is that it depends on the West Germans whether European policy is formulated in London or in Paris. The uncertainty over this choice runs right through German public opinion, and ultimately through the ruling party and the Bonn government. A Europe à la de Gaulle which plays the part of a "third force" between the USA and the USSR is not the kind of Europe the British and their German friends want (whatever Mr. Macmillan may have told de Gaulle in private). Before the summer is out, we shall know whether they are strong enough to carry the day. Meanwhile a good deal depends on an old gentleman of eighty-six, who may yet complete his life-work by carrying the Federal Republic into a European confederation from which *"les Anglo-Saxons"* have been effectively excluded.

On the face of it, such a consummation seems improbable. Surely, says the voice of Anglo-American common sense, two old men in Bonn and Paris cannot hold back the tide flowing toward an integrated Europe—including Britain—which will be a loyal partner of America within the Atlantic Community? Surely the Germans cannot opt for Paris if it means opting against Washington? Nor indeed are they inclined to do so. (Adenauer himself made this clear in the days after de Gaulle had come out with his "third force" Europe on May 15.) They may, however, come to look upon a Franco-German bloc of 100 million people in the center of Europe as a useful counterweight to Britain within the alliance. There is, after all, the issue of nuclear parity. The British are disinclined to abandon their "independent deterrent" or to share it with de Gaulle. The French, not unreasonably, argue that what is sauce for Britain must be sauce for her European allies. The Germans keep quiet, but their sympathies are clearly on the French side. This does not mean that they are about to underwrite de Gaulle's scheme for making the Continent relatively independent of NATO and the USA. It does mean that, if they choose to do so, they can exploit the triangular Anglo-Franco-German relationship in order to acquire nuclear status for themselves—whether or not Washington favors the idea. The decision will probably fall this summer. Whichever way it goes, the Paris-Bonn axis looks like becoming the backbone of the European confederation—unless the British step in and persuade de Gaulle that an Anglo-French arrangement offers him greater scope on the Atlantic level. At this point, all guesswork has to stop. Forecasting becomes perilous on occasions where the personal factor is the crucial element in the equation.

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TADEUSZ BOROWSKI

THIS WAY FOR THE GAS—A Story

TADEUSZ BOROWSKI, *regarded in Poland as one of their best contemporary writers, spent several years as a political prisoner in Nazi concentration camps and afterward published a number of brilliant realistic stories based on his experiences there. A poet as well as a writer of fiction, Borowski was an enthusiastic spokesman for the postwar Communist regime. But one day in 1951 he was found dead, a suicide, in his home in Warsaw. Czeslaw Milosz in his chapter on Borowski in* The Captive Mind *says: "Those who observed him in the last months of his feverish activity were of the opinion that the discrepancy between what he said in his public statements and what his quick mind could perceive was increasing daily." The present story, translated by* BARBARA VEDDER, *is taken from a collection (untranslated) called "Farewell, Maria"; another story by Borowski appears in an English anthology of Polish writers,* The Modern Polish Mind, *recently issued by Little, Brown & Co.*

EVERYBODY IS NAKED in the camp. Though the delousing is finished and our clothes are back from the tanks of the Ozone-2 that efficiently kills lice in clothing and humans in ovens. The heat is unbearable. The camp has been sealed off tight so that not a single prisoner, not one solitary louse, can get through the gate. All day long thousands of naked people drag themselves over the paths or lie against the walls and on the roof ledges. The women's camp is being deloused and twenty-eight thousand women have been stripped naked and chased out of their barracks. They are standing together in the yard nearby.

The heat rises, the hours are endless. There have been no new transports for several days. We are without even our usual distraction; the wide roads leading to the crematories are empty.

Several of us sit on the top bunk. We dangle our legs and slice the neat loaves of crisp, crumbly bread. It is a little coarse to the taste, the kind that stays fresh for weeks. Sent all the way from Warsaw; only a week ago my mother held this white bread in her hands . . . dear God, dear God. . . .

We unwrap the bacon, the onion, we open a can of condensed milk. Henri, the fat Frenchman, dreams out loud about French wine brought in with the transports from Strasbourg, Paris, Marseille. The sweat streams down his body.

"Listen, *mon ami,* next time we go on the loading ramp, I'll bring you real champagne. I bet you never had any, what?"

"No, but you can't smuggle it through the gate, so stop kidding. Better try and get me some shoes, the perforated kind, you know, with a double sole, and that shirt you promised a while back."

"Patience, patience, when the new transports come in, I'll bring all you want. We'll be going on the ramp again."

"And what if there aren't any more oven transports?" I say spitefully. "Can't you see how fast things are thawing out around here—unlimited packages, no more beatings? You write letters home even. . . . All kinds of talk is going around and, dammit, they'll run out of people!"

"Stop talking nonsense." Henri's serious fat face moves rhythmically, his mouth is filled with sardines. We have been friends for a long time but I don't know his last

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name. "Stop talking nonsense," he repeats, swallowing hard. "They can't run out of people; we'll starve to death in this blasted camp. All of us live on what they bring."

"Not all. We have our packages. . . ."

"Yes, you and your friend and ten other friends of yours. You Poles get packages. But what about us and the Jews and the Russkis? And if we had no food, no supplies from the transports, you think you could eat those packages of yours in peace? We wouldn't let you!"

"You would, you'd starve to death like the Greeks. Around here, whoever has grub, has strength."

"Anyway, you have enough, we have enough, so why argue?"

Right, why argue. They have enough, I have enough, we eat together and we sleep on the same bunks. Henri slices the bread, he makes a tomato salad. It tastes good with mustard. Below us, the naked miserable creatures drenched in sweat plod along the narrow aisles and crowd into the lower bunks in eights and tens. They are naked and thin, stink of sweat and excrement, their cheeks are hollow. Directly underneath me, in the lowest bunk, is a rabbi; he has covered his head with a rag and is reading from a Hebrew prayer book (there's no shortage of this type of literature). He is wailing, loudly and monotonously.

"Couldn't he be shut up? He's been hollering as though he'd caught God himself by the feet."

"I don't feel like moving. Let him holler, he'll go to the oven that much sooner."

"Religion is the opium of the people," Henri, who is a Communist and a rentier, says sententiously. "If they didn't believe in God and eternal life, they'd have torn down the crematories long ago."

"Why don't you do it then?" The question is a rhetorical one, which the Frenchman ignores. "Idiot," he says and stuffs tomato in his mouth.

Suddenly there's a commotion over by the entrance. Below us, they scurry in fright to their bunks. Our block leader walks in with a serious expression on his face.

"Canada*! *Antreten!* Hurry up! A transport is coming!"

"Good God!" yells Henri, jumping down. He swallows the tomato, grabs his coat, shouts *"Raus"* to the prisoners in the lower bunks, and runs to the door. The Canada men are leaving for the loading ramp.

"Henri, the shoes!" I call after him.

"Keine Angst!" he shouts back.

I proceed to put away the food. I tie a piece of rope around the suitcase, pull on my trousers, and scramble down. In the doorway I bump into Henri.

"Allez, allez, vite, vite!"

"Was ist los?"

"Want to come to the ramp with us?"

"Sure, why not?"

"Come along then, take your coat. They're short a few men. I've already spoken to the kapo," and he pushes me through the door.

We line up, someone takes our numbers, someone up ahead calls "March, march," and now we are running toward the gate, accompanied by shouts of a multilingual crowd that is already being pushed back to the barracks. Not everybody has the privilege of going on the ramp. We've almost reached the gate. *Links, zwei, drei, vier! Muetzen ab!* Erect, arms stretched stiffly down our hips, we pass through the gate briskly, smartly, almost gracefully. A sleepy SS man holding a large pad phlegmatically checks us off, marking each five men with a wave of his arm.

"Hundert!" he calls after we have all passed.

"Stimmt!" comes a hoarse shout from out front.

We march rapidly, almost at a run. All around there are guards, young men with

* The name (because Canada was supposed to be the land of great riches) used by the camp inmates to designate the storehouses where valuables taken from gassed prisoners were kept; the word was also used for inmates employed around this activity.—ED.

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machine guns. We pass some deserted barracks, and a clump of unfamiliar green, apple and pear trees. We burst on to the highway, and now we have arrived. A couple of yards more; there, surrounded by trees, is the ramp.

A cheerful little station, typical of many such provincial railroad stops: a small square, framed by tall chestnuts and paved with yellow gravel. Over to the side, by the road, stands a wooden shed; further along are large stacks of old rails, logs, bricks. This is where they do the loading for Birkenau: the supplies for construction in the camp, and the people for the gas ovens.

Now the guards are being posted along the rails, on the logs, in the green shade of the Silesian chestnuts, forming a tight circle around the ramp. They wipe the sweat from their faces and drink from their canteens. It is unbearably hot, the sun stands motionless at its zenith.

"Disperse!"

We sit down in the narrow streaks of shade alongside the stacked rails. The hungry Greeks (several of them managed to come along, God only knows how) hunt under the rails. Someone finds a few pieces of mildewed bread, someone else a few half-rotten sardines. They eat.

"Schweinedreck," spits a young, tall guard with corn-colored hair and dreamy blue eyes, "soon you'll have so much food to stuff in your guts, you'll burst." He adjusts his gun, wipes his face with a handkerchief.

"Now you be careful," Henri says to me. "Don't take any money, they might be checking. Anyway, who the hell needs money, we have enough to eat. Don't take suits, either, or they'll think you plan to escape. Just get a shirt, a silk one, with a collar. And an undershirt. And if you find something to drink, don't bother calling me. I can manage for myself, but you watch your step or they'll let you have it."

"They'll beat us?"

"Sure thing. You have to have eyes in your back. *Arschaugen.*"

"Was wir arbeiten?" ask the Greeks nervously, chewing on the moldy bits of bread.

"Niks. Transport kommen, alles Krematorium, compris?"

"Alles verstehen," they answer in crematory Esperanto.

IN THE MEANTIME the ramp has become more and more bustling, more and more noisy. The crews are divided into those who will open and unload the arriving freight cars and those who are to stay by the wooden steps. Motorcycles drive up, delivering SS officers, bemedaled, glittering with brass, beefy men with highly polished boots and shiny, brutal faces. Some carry briefcases, others hold thin, flexible whips. They greet each other raising an arm, Roman fashion, then shake hands cordially. Some stroll over the ramp; the silver squares glitter on their collars, the bamboo whips snap impatiently.

We lie against the rails and gaze listlessly at the men in their green uniforms, at the green trees, and at the church steeple which is visible from the distant village.

"The transport is coming," somebody says. We rise expectantly. Around the bend, one after another, the cattle cars begin rolling in: the train backs up, a conductor leans out, waves his arm, blows a whistle. The locomotive whistles back loudly, puffs, the train rolls slowly in along the ramp. Through the tiny barred windows, pale, wilted, exhausted human faces appear, tangled hair, terrified women, unshaven men. They gaze at the station in silence as the train slowly passes. But suddenly inside the cars something begins stirring and pounding.

"Water! Air!" come the monotonous, despairing cries.

Faces push at the windows, lips gasp desperately for air. The pressing faces draw a few breaths, then disappear; others come and disappear. The cries and moans get louder.

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A man in a green uniform covered with more glitter than any of the others jerks up his head, his lips twist in disgust. He inhales deeply, then with a rapid gesture throws the cigarette away and signals to the guard. Slowly the guard removes the machine gun from his shoulder, aims, sends a series of shots across the train. All is quiet now. Meantime the trucks have arrived, steps are being drawn up, and Canada men stand ready at the train exits. The SS officer with the briefcase raises his hand:

"Whoever takes gold or anything besides food will be shot for stealing the property of the Reich. Understand? *Verstanden?*"

"Jawohl!" we answer unevenly, but eagerly.

"Also los! Begin!"

The bolts crack, the doors open. A wave of fresh air pours into the train. People . . . inhumanly cramped, buried under a terrifying amount of luggage, trunks, suitcases, packages, cases, bundles of every kind (they have brought everything that had been their past and was to start their future). They have been packed into a monstrous heap, have fainted from heat, have suffocated, trampled each other. Now they cluster at the open doors, breathing like fish cast out on the beach.

"Attention, get out. Take your luggage. Take everything. All the stuff must be piled up by the exits. Your coats too. It's summer. March to the left. Understand?"

"Sir, what's going to happen to us?" they jump down on to the gravel, anxious, worn out.

"Where are you from?"

"Sosnowiec, Bedzin, sir. What's going to happen to us?" they repeat the question stubbornly, gazing into our tired eyes.

"I don't know, I don't understand Polish." It's the concentration camp law that those going to their death must be deceived up to the end. This is the only permitted form of charity.

The heat has increased. The sun is directly over our heads, the white-hot sky quivers, the air vibrates, an occasional breeze feels like a sizzling, molten gust. Our lips are parched, the mouth fills with the salty taste of blood. The body is weak and heavy from lying in the sun. Water!

A HUGE, MULTICOLORED wave of people, loaded down with luggage, pours from the train like a wide river that tries to find a new bed. But before they have a chance to come to, before they can inhale some fresh air and look at the sky, bundles are already being snatched out of their hands, coats are pulled off their backs, women's purses and umbrellas are taken away from them.

"But sir, it's for the sun, I cannot. . . ."

"Verboten," one of us barks through clenched teeth, hissing sharply. There's an SS man standing behind one's back, calm, controlled, correct.

"*Meine Herrschaften,* ladies and gentlemen, don't throw your things around, please. Show some good will," he says kindly; his hands nervously play with the slender whip.

"Certainly, certainly," many voices answer, and now they walk alongside the train a little more cheerfully. A woman bends quickly to pick up a purse. The whip flies, the woman cries out, stumbles and falls under the feet of the surging crowd. A child behind her screams: *"Mamele!"* —a very small girl with tangled black curls.

The heaps grow. Suitcases, bundles, blankets, coats, pocketbooks that open as they fall, spilling coins, gold, watches; mountains of bread pile up at the exits, jars of marmalades, jams; masses of meat, sausages; sugar spills on the gravel. Trucks, loaded with people, start up with a deafening roar amidst the wailing and screaming of women separated from their children and the stupefied silence of the men left behind. They are the ones who had been ordered to step to the right—they are the healthy and the young who will go to the camp. In the end they will

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not escape the gas ovens, only first they must work.

Trucks go and come, without interruption, as on a monstrous belt. A Red Cross van goes back and forth incessantly: it transports gas, the gas that will kill these people.

The Canada men working at the trucks are not able to stop for a moment even to catch their breath. They push those going to the ovens up the steps, pack them in tightly, sixty in each truck, more or less. A young, clean-shaven gentleman, an SS man with a notebook in his hand, stands on the side; every truck gets one mark in the notebook. When sixteen trucks have gone, it makes one thousand, more or less. The gentleman is calm, precise. No truck can leave without his signal and a mark in his notebook: *Ordnung muss sein.* The marks grow into thousands, the thousands into entire transports; later the transports will be described in a word: "from Salonika," "from Strasbourg," "from Rotterdam." This one will be "Sosnowiec-Bedzin."

THE TRAIN HAS been unloaded. A thin, pock-marked SS man composedly peers inside, shakes his head in disgust and motions toward us.

"*Rein.* Clean this up!"

We climb inside. Scattered in corners among human excrement and lost wrist watches lie smothered, trampled, squashed babies, naked little monsters with huge heads and blown-up bellies. We carry them out like chickens, holding several in each hand.

"Don't take them to the truck, pass them to the women," says the SS man lighting a cigarette. His lighter isn't working properly, he is preoccupied with fixing it.

"Take them, for God's sake!" I blow up when the women run from me in horror, hiding their heads between their shoulders. The name of God sounds strangely pointless, since the babies will go with the women on the trucks, all will go, without exception. We know what will happen, and we look at each other with hate and horror.

"So, you don't want to take them?" says the pock-marked SS man with a note of surprise and reproach in his voice, and he reaches for his revolver.

"You mustn't shoot, I'll carry them." A tall, gray-haired woman takes the little corpses out of my hands and for an instant looks straight into my eyes. "My child, my child," she whispers, and smiles. Then she walks away, stumbling on the gravel. I lean against the side of the train. I am terribly tired. Someone pulls at my sleeve.

"*En avant,* to the rails, come on!" I look up, but the face swims before my eyes, dissolves, huge and transparent, melts into the motionless trees and the churning crowd. . . . I blink rapidly: Henri.

"Listen, Henri, are we good people?"

"That's stupid, why do you ask?"

"You see, my friend, you see, I am furious, unreasonably furious at these people—that I must be here because of them. I don't feel any pity for them, I'm not sorry that they're going to the gas. Damn them all! I could throw myself at them with my fists. It must be pathological, I can't understand. . . ."

"Ah, on the contrary, it is natural, foreseen, calculated. This job exhausts you, you rebel against it—and the easiest way to relieve your hate is to turn against someone weaker. Why, I'd even call it healthy. It's simple logic, *compris*?" He seats himself comfortably against the heap of rails. "Look at the Greeks, they know how to make the most of it! They stuff their bellies with anything they can lay their hands on; one has just consumed a whole jar of marmalade."

"Swine! Tomorrow half of them will die of the shits."

"Swine? You've been hungry."

"Swine!" I say again furiously. I close my eyes. The air is filled with ghastly noises, the earth trembles under me, I can feel a sticky moisture on my eyelids. My throat is utterly dry. The morbid proces-

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sion streams on and on—trucks growl like mad dogs. I shut my eyes tight, but I can still see corpses dragged out of cars, trampled infants, cripples piled on top of the dead, wave after wave of people . . . freight cars roll in, the heaps of clothes, suitcases, and bundles grow, people get out, look at the sun, take a few breaths, beg for water, walk to the trucks, drive away. And again freight cars pull in, again people. . . . The scenes become confused in my mind; I am not sure whether all this is happening, or whether I am dreaming. There's humming inside my head, I feel that I must vomit.

Henri touches my arm. "Don't sleep, we must load up the loot."

NOW ALL THE people are gone. In the distance, the last few trucks roll along the road in clouds of dust, the train has left, several SS men promenade stiffly along the ramp, the silver glitters on their uniforms. Their boots shine, their red, beefy faces shine.

We start loading the loot. We lift heavy trunks, toss them up with an effort into the trucks. There they are arranged in stacks, packed tightly. One of the trunks falls open, suits, shirts, books drop out on the ground. . . . I pick up a small, heavy package. I unwrap it: gold, about two handfuls; bracelets, rings, pins, diamonds.

"Gib hier," calmly says an SS man holding up his briefcase full of gold and colored foreign currency. The gold will go to the Reich.

It is hot, terribly hot. Our throats are dry, every word hurts. Oh, anything for a drink of water! Faster, faster, let's get it over with so we can rest. At last we are done, all the trucks have gone. Now we quickly clean up the remaining transport dirt, "so there'll be no traces left of the *Schweinerei.*" But just as the last truck disappears behind the trees and we go—finally!—to rest in the shade, a shrill whistle sounds over the bend. Slowly, terribly slowly, the train rolls in, the engine answers with a deafening shriek; weary, pale faces at the windows, flat, as though cut out of paper, with huge, feverishly burning eyes. Already trucks are pulling up, already the calm gentleman with the notebook is here, and SS men emerge from their canteen carrying briefcases for the gold and money. We open the train doors.

It is impossible to control oneself any longer. Brutally we yank suitcases from people's hands, impatiently pull off their coats. Go on, go on, vanish. They go, they vanish. Men, women, children. Some of them know.

Here's a woman—she walks quickly, but tries to appear calm. A small child, with a pink cherub's face, runs behind her and unable to catch up stretches out his little hands and cries: "Mummy! Mummy!"

"Pick up your child, woman!"

"Sir, it's not my child, it's not mine!" she shouts hysterically and runs on, covering her face with her hands. She wants to hide, she wants to get to those who will not ride the trucks, those who will go on foot, those who will live. She is young, healthy, good looking, she wants to stay alive. But the child runs after her, wailing very loudly: "Mummy, mummy, don't run away!"

"It's not mine, not mine, no!"

But she is already caught by Andrei, a sailor from Sebastopol. His eyes are glazed from vodka and the heat. With one powerful blow he knocks her off her feet, then seizes the falling woman by the hair and drags her up again. His face is distorted with fury.

"Ah you, bloody Jewess! So you're running away from your own child! I'll fix you, you whore!" His big arm chokes her, he lifts her in the air and tosses her up on the truck like a heavy sack of grain. "Here! Take this with you, bitch!" and he throws the child at her feet.

"*Gut gemacht,* good work, that's the way to deal with unnatural mothers," says the SS man standing at the foot of the truck. *"Gut, gut Ruski."*

"Shut your mouth," growls Andrei through clenched teeth and walks away.

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From under a pile of rags he pulls out a canteen, unscrews it, takes a few deep swallows, passes it to me. The strong alcohol burns the throat. My head swims, my legs are shaky, again I feel like throwing up.

AND SUDDENLY, above the teeming crowd pushing forward like a river driven by an unseen power, there appears a girl. She hops lightly from the train onto the gravel, looks around inquiringly, like one who is very much surprised at something. Her soft, blond hair has fallen on her shoulders in a torrent, she throws it back impatiently. With an automatic gesture she pulls her hands along her blouse, casually straightens her skirt. She stands this way for an instant, then her gaze leaves the crowd and glides along our faces, as though searching for someone. Unconsciously I continue to stare at her until our eyes meet.

"Listen, listen, tell me, where are they taking us?"

I look at her. Here, standing before me, is a girl—a girl with enchanting blond hair, with beautiful breasts, in a little cotton blouse, with a wise, mature look in her eyes. She stands here, looking straight into my face, waiting. And over there is the gas oven: communal death, disgusting and ugly. And over there is the concentration camp: the shaved head, the heavy Soviet trousers in sweltering weather, the sickening, stale odor of dirty, damp female bodies, the animal hunger, the inhuman labor, and later the same gas oven, only an even more hideous, more terrible death. . . .

"Why did she bring it, they'll take it away from her anyway," I think to myself, noticing a lovely gold watch on her delicate wrist.

"Listen, tell me?" she repeats.

I do not answer. Her lips tighten. "I know," she says with a shade of proud contempt in her voice, tossing back her head; she walks resolutely toward the trucks. Someone tries to stop her; boldly she pushes him aside and runs up the steps. I can only catch in the distance a glimpse of her blond hair as it flies in the breeze.

I go back inside the train, I carry out babies, I unload luggage. I touch corpses, but I can't overcome the mounting, uncontrollable terror. I try to run away from them, but they are everywhere: lined up on the gravel, on the cement edge of the ramp, inside the freight cars. Infants, hideous naked women, men twisted by convulsions. I escape as far as I can go, but immediately a whip falls across my back. Out of the side of my eye I can see an SS man, swearing profusely. I stagger forward and run, lose myself in the Canada group. Now, at last, again we can rest against the stack of rails. The sun has leaned deeply over the horizon and is illuminating the ramp with a reddish glow. In the silence that settles over nature at this time of day, the human cries and groans seem to rise ever more loudly to the sky.

Only from this distance can one have a full view of the inferno on the teeming ramp. There are two human beings who have fallen to the ground locked in a last desperate embrace. The man has dug into the woman's flesh and holds on to her clothing with his teeth. She shouts hysterically, swears, cries, until at last a large boot comes down over her throat and she is silent. They are pulled apart and dragged like animals to the truck. Here are four Canada men, carrying a corpse: a huge, swollen female body. Swearing, wet from strain, they kick out of the way some stray children who have been running all over the ramp and howling like dogs. The men pick the children up by the collars, heads, arms, and toss them on the heaps in the trucks. They collect big swollen puffed-up corpses from all over the ramp, pile on top of them the invalids, the semi-smothered, the sick, the unconscious. The mountain of corpses seethes, howls, groans. The driver starts the motor, the truck begins rolling.

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"Halt! Halt!" yells an SS man. "Stop, damn you!" An old gentleman, dressed in tails and wearing a band on his arm, is being dragged toward the truck. His head knocks against the gravel and stones, he groans and wails monotonously and continually: *"Ich will mit dem Herrn Kommendanten sprechen*—I wish to speak with the commander. . . ." With senile stubbornness, he keeps repeating this all the way. Tossed up on the truck, trampled by others, choked, he moans still: *"Ich will mit dem. . . ."*

"Quiet, old man!" shouts a young SS man, laughing loudly. "In half an hour you'll be talking to the highest commander! Only don't forget to say *Heil Hitler* to him!"

Others are carrying a little girl without a leg; they hold her by the arms and the one remaining leg. Tears are running down her face, she whispers softly: "Sir, it hurts, it hurts. . . ." They throw her on the truck, on top of the corpses. She will be burned alive with them.

THE EVENING HAS arrived, cool and clear. We lie against the rails—it is incredibly quiet.

"Did you get the shoes?" asks Henri.

"No."

"Why?"

"My God, man, I've enough, absolutely enough!"

"Already? After a first transport? Just think, I . . . since Christmas, at least a million people have passed through my hands. The worst are the transports from around Paris: one always meets friends."

"And what do you tell them?"

"That they're going to have a bath, and then we'll meet at the camp. What would you tell them?"

I do not answer. We drink coffee mixed with alcohol.

"Henri, what are we waiting for?"

"There'll be another transport."

"When it comes, I'm not going to unload it. I can't take any more."

"It's gotten you down, what? Nice Canada?" Henri grins amiably and disappears in the dark. In a moment he is back. "All right. Just sit here quietly. I'll try to find you your shoes."

"Don't bother me about the shoes." I want to sleep. The night is dark.

Again there's a whistle, another transport. Freight cars emerge from the darkness into a small circle of light on the ramp. Somewhere the trucks are growling. They back up to the steps, black, ghostlike. *Wasser! Luft!* The same all over again, like a late showing of the same film: a series of shots, the train is silent. But now a small girl leans out from a window and, losing her balance, falls over on the sand. She lies for a moment without moving and then rises and begins walking around in a circle, faster and faster, waving her stiff arms, breathing spasmodically and howling in a thin voice. She has lost her mind in the crowded train. This is hard on the nerves, so an SS man runs up and kicks her between the shoulders with his large boot. She falls. Holding her down with his foot he draws out a revolver, shoots once, then the second time: she remains on the ground kicking the dirt with her feet until she stiffens. The train doors are being opened.

Again I stand at the exits. A warm, sickening smell gushes from the inside. The mountain of people filling the cars almost to the ceiling is motionless, horribly tangled, but still steeming.

"Ausladen!" comes the voice of an SS man who has walked into the circle of light. "Why are you standing like sheep? Start unloading!" His whip flies and falls on our backs. I seize the hand of a corpse: the fingers close tightly around mine. I pull back with a scream and stagger away. My heart pounds, jumps up to my throat. I can no longer control the nausea. Hunched under the train I begin to vomit. Then, like a man drunk, I weave over to the stack of rails.

I lie against the cool, kind metal and dream about returning to the camp to be with my friends who are not going to the

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gas ovens tonight. The lights on the ramp flicker with a spectral glow, the people walk on and on, endlessly, swarming, stupefied, anxious. They believe that now they must face a new life in the camp, and they prepare themselves emotionally for a hard struggle ahead. They don't know that in just a few moments they will die, that the gold, money, and diamonds which they have so prudently hidden in their clothing and on their bodies is now useless to them.

IT IS ALMOST finished. The dead are being cleared off the ramp and loaded into the last truck. Canada men, carrying heavy loads of bread, marmalade, sugar, etc. are lining up to go. For a few days the whole camp will live on this transport. For a few days the whole camp will talk about the "Sosnowiec-Bedzin." The "Sosnowiec-Bedzin" has been a good, rich transport.

The stars are already beginning to pale as we walk back to the camp. The sky becomes translucent and lifts higher over our heads—it is getting light.

Great columns of smoke rise from the crematories and merge up above into a huge black river which very slowly floats through the sky over Birkenau and disappears beyond the forests in the direction of Trzebinia. The "Sosnowiec-Bedzin" transport is already burning.

We pass an SS detachment marching with machine guns to change guard. They step briskly, evenly, shoulder to shoulder, one mass, one will.

"Und morgen die ganze Welt. . . ."
they sing at the top of their voices.

"Rechts ran! To the right march!" comes a command from up ahead. We move out of their way.

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STEVEN MARCUS

WHO IS FAGIN?

FAGIN is back in the news. The English musical play, *Oliver!*, which is scheduled to open in New York next season, will almost certainly stir up the same kind of protest from various Jewish groups that the film of *Oliver Twist* did a decade ago. Alec Guinness's lisping, asthmatic, and vaguely homosexual Fagin of the film has in the newest version apparently been displaced by an out-and-out East End type. Insofar as protest against such representations is directed against the implicit equation they set up between certain conventional Jewish characteristics and moral malignity, it is of course justified. Yet we should note that the dramatic interpretations of Fagin have always, in some degree, been radical departures from the Fagin of the novel. While Dickens was still writing *Oliver Twist,* a theatrical pirate made an adaptation of it which Dickens went to see. It was so offensively bad that in the middle of the first scene the young novelist laid himself down on the floor of his box and never rose until the curtain dropped.

Nevertheless, there is some reason behind all this confusion about how to interpret Fagin on the stage, for he is one of Dickens's most puzzling characters. Much has been written about him, though very little light has been cast. Indeed, one of the most recent and most intelligent discussions of the subject—in Edgar Rosenberg's excellent book, *From Shylock to Svengali*—ends with the writer throwing up his hands in frustration. "But how *can* one account for Fagin?" Mr. Rosenberg asks, making reference to how, given what we know of Dickens's experience, Fagin should have come about. In order to track down these "curious processes," he believes, "one should have to command some ultimate psychology." Mr. Rosenberg may be right, but I do think that something at least can be done even without the help of such "ultimate" assurances.

IT HAS often been remarked that although Fagin—with his "villainous-looking and repulsive face . . . obscured by a quantity of matted red hair," and his "greasy flannel gown"—is got up in the traditional habit of the stage Jew, Judas, and devil, there is otherwise nothing particularly Jewish about him. This formulation may not be entirely exact, and it has been alternatively suggested that Fagin is a renegade Jew. In any event, when we first see him, he is cooking sausages for his boys, and it is clear throughout that such matters as the dietary laws and the customs of the Jewish community mean nothing to him. In fact, on the eve of his execution, "Venerable men of his own persuasion had come to pray beside him, but he had driven them away with curses. They renewed their charitable efforts, and he beat them off." Furthermore, he does not even speak with an accent or in any particular dialect—unless it be the thieves' cant into which he, like his non-Jewish associates, often drops. This is all the more pointed because the one other Jew in *Oliver Twist,* Barney, the boy-of-all-work at The Cripples, speaks with the pronounced nasality which was apparently characteristic of London Jews during the 18th and 19th centuries. So far as speech is concerned, Fagin resembles no one so much as his oppo-

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site and counterpart, Oliver Twist, whose own speech—the most improbable and pure-bred English—is also symbolic of his alienation from the world in which he finds himself. And indeed, from the point of view of that "respectable" society which had recently created the New Poor Law of 1834, Oliver Twist—a bastard, an orphan, and a workhouse child—and Fagin—a vicious criminal—were alike if not identical. Under the new Malthusian dispensation, the English poor were to be treated so harshly and punitively that they were to have been willing to do almost anything rather than throw themselves on the tender mercies of the state. Poverty was at last tantamount to crime, and the new "unions" or workhouses soon came to be universally known as Bastilles. At this stage in the development of modern industrial society, the pauper and the criminal were regarded equally as outcasts. Both existed on the periphery of society; at the same time both existed within the shadow of that central and indispensable social institution, the prison—one of the many implications of this being that, in modern society at least, what seems to be marginal and alien can in fact prove to be central and essential, as the history of modern art and literature repeatedly indicates. Both paupers and criminals also existed within their own society or class, and one of the chief imaginative devices in *Oliver Twist* consists in Dickens's representation of the values, habits, and structure of ordinary "respectable" society as analogous to those which inform the world of the thieves and the paupers. Oliver and Fagin are at the focus of this remarkable vision. They are symbiotic characters, like Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, or Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, or Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom—that is to say, we cannot understand them apart from each other.

But we know something else about Fagin, something anterior to his function in this novel. We know how he got his name. Dickens took it from the name of a boy who played a part in the chief episode of his childhood. Our present purpose requires that we read this immortal story anew.

Charles Dickens spent most of his childhood in the vicinity of Rochester, where his father, John Dickens, was employed as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. John Dickens was a vivacious, energetic, garrulous, ambitious, but somehow incompetent man. He aspired particularly to genteel speech and manners, and clearly thought of himself as a rising young man. And with reason, for his parents had been domestic servants. It is also evident that Charles, his second child and oldest son, was his father's favorite and special object of his pride. Although Charles had been, in John Forster's words, "a very little and a very sickly boy" who suffered from "attacks of violent spasm which disabled him for any active exertion," he was a precocious child and gave early evidence of a talent for imaginative play, for reciting and acting and singing little comic songs. His father delighted in his son's small exertions of talent, and often found occasion to show them off before friends and guests. It was at this time too that John Dickens bought a set of cheap reprints of the classic novels, which his son chanced upon, read, re-read, and re-read again, living in them and impersonating his favorite characters with what was already characteristic intensity. "When I think of it," he wrote years later, "the picture always arises in my mind of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I sitting on my bed, reading as if for life." We will return to this memory.

Meanwhile things were not improving for his father. The family kept growing, in that inexorable 19th-century way; and John Dickens, kindly yet improvident, well-meaning but, like Mr. Micawber (who is a partial portrait of him), unable to meet the unyielding demands of the world of money and domestic responsibilities, began to descend the slippery slope of respectability which he had until then been confidently climbing. At the bottom of that decline, of course, gaped the abyss of that special middle-class hell, poverty. Sometime in the latter part of 1822, he was transferred to London, where the family was installed in a little four-room house in Camden Town. And things kept getting worse.

Charles had been attending school in Chatham and apparently expected that his parents would continue his education when they were settled in London, but they did not. It was a cause of undying bitterness to him. As he would write years later:

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> I know my father to be as kindhearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. But, in the ease of his temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all; and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard, whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living.

Matters continued so for upwards of a year: the family's fortunes steadily worsened, possessions were sold off (including, at the very outset, the books), schemes for salvation came to nothing, arrest for debt constantly threatened. As for Charles, forgotten amid the general hopelessness and distraction, he was afflicted by the recurrence of his early malady—spasms in the side often accompanied by fever—which had for a time subsided.

The crisis was reached in February 1824, the month of Charles's twelfth birthday. Within two weeks, he was sent to work and his father was imprisoned for debt. Through the influence of a friendly relation, Charles was employed at a blacking warehouse, at 30 Hungerford Stairs, Strand: his wages were six or seven shillings a week, his hours 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. Edgar Johnson in his biography of Dickens properly reminds us that none of these circumstances were unusual for that time: boys were often sent to work at an earlier age, and the average period of schooling then and even later was something short of two years. What was unusual was that these things were happening to the person who was to become Charles Dickens, though his parents could hardly have been expected to know it. The boy himself, and the man after him, felt utterly violated. When he came to write about the incident twenty-five years later, his bitterness had not staled.

> It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me, that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. . . . No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge.

Coupled with the emotions of betrayal and desertion were those of social disgrace and humiliation—the young prince suddenly discovers that he may be the swineherd's son, and not the other way around.

ELEVEN DAYS after Charles began to work at Warren's Blacking, his father was arrested; his last words addressed to his sobbing son as he entered the gates of the Marshalsea was that the sun had set upon him forever. As he heard this the boy felt that his heart was really breaking. Soon after John Dickens entered prison, Mrs. Dickens and her four younger children moved in with him. (Bankrupt as they were, they retained a little servant girl whom they had gotten from the Chatham workhouse: they were not, one must recall, paupers. These monstrous and pathetic distinctions are treated with incomparable mastery in *Little Dorrit*.) Charles was left to live alone on the outside, an outcast of freedom, a "small Cain" as he called himself. He was able to visit his parents and family on Sundays, but for some time he had to live without any "assistance whatever . . . from Monday morning until Saturday night. No advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no support, from any one that I can call to mind, so help me God." Left to shift for himself, his sense of abandonment and humiliation often seemed to border upon despair; he later thought it a miracle that he had been spared to survive. "I know that I worked from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. . . . I know that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond." If the impossible could happen, and Oliver Twist grow up into a man, this is what he would say—provided, of course, that he were to retain his virtue of telling the truth.

After John Dickens had been in prison for

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three months, his mother, the former domestic servant, died and left her son a legacy large enough to secure his release. The family was reunited, but nothing was done about Charles. "I had the same wanderings about the streets as I used to have, and was just as solitary and self-dependent as before; but I had not the same difficulty in merely living. I never however heard a word of being taken away, or of being otherwise than quite provided for." In any event, only a chance quarrel between his father and the relation who had gotten the work for Charles brought his drudgery to an end. The conditions of this quarrel we shall recur to, but we may note here that it was at his father's insistence that Charles left the warehouse.

Dickens could never forget the entire episode, but neither could he in certain senses confront it. For years he literally avoided the spot on which the warehouse stood. Moreover, this period of his childhood remained an absolute secret to everyone except his close friend Forster, whom Dickens allowed to read the autobiographical fragment, written sometime in the late 1840's, from which I have been quoting. Although this remarkable document speaks for itself—and in its human impressiveness tends to make most comment seem trifling—if we recall that it was written by the greatest *comic* genius who ever lived, our sense of the nature and origins of comedy may be enlarged. Perhaps Plato was right when, at the end of *The Symposium,* he asserted through Socrates that the genius of comedy is the same as that of tragedy.

But the document we have been discussing was also written by a man who had become the most famous, successful, and adulated novelist of his time, who wrote it at the height of his fame and in the fullness of his powers. "My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations," he nevertheless stated, "that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life." Though he might keep that time a dark secret even from his family—and his reasons for doing so were complex—it was never far from his mind. Indeed, it figures in some central way in every novel he wrote; and we cannot understand the creative thrust of his life without taking into account his developing attitudes toward this episode, as we find them successively transmuted in novel after novel. I am not suggesting this as, so to speak, a "key" to Dickens. There is no such thing for an artist, especially a great one, just as there is no single way of regarding or understanding a work of art. Nevertheless, this episode, and Dickens's extreme ambivalence toward it—he was at once virtually unable to speak about it and obsessively drawn to it—became one of the foci or gathering places of his creative impulses. It provides us, furthermore, with an unsurpassable instance of how in a great genius the "impersonal" achievement of art is inseparable from an engagement on the artist's part with the deepest, most personal stresses of his experience.

II

And now to Fagin. When Charles first went to work at the warehouse, he was installed in a small recess in the counting-house, a privilege of class and relation. His work was "to cover the pots of paste-blacking" with two kinds of paper, then tie them round with a string, clip the paper close and neat, and paste a printed label on each pot. "Two or three boys were kept at similar duty downstairs on similar wages. One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterwards, in *Oliver Twist.*" So casual and off-hand a revelation of what must by nature be a highly charged fact is itself evidence of the high charge. It hardly requires the command of an "ultimate psychology" to see that there is no great distance between Bob Fagin's induction of Charles on his first day of work into the secrets of wrapping and tying, and the wonderful scene in which Fagin teaches class in elementary and advanced pickpocketing. His methods are admirably progressive: strictly learning by doing. The boys are rewarded for proficiency, and even Oliver, pure, innocent, and until that moment perfectly isolated in misery, is so charmed by the "game," and by Fagin's superb imitation of the victim that for the first time in the novel, he laughs, and is happy, and feels at home.

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Immediately thereafter, he has his own first lesson, and does quite well at it, another tribute to Fagin's intuitive skills as an educator. Never try to instruct a child who seems unhappy: neither Freud nor John Dewey can be held accountable for communicating this diabolic wisdom to our age. The Devil himself has been at it all along.

When Charles started work it was proposed that his relative, who was employed in the counting-house, would teach him something—something more "academic," that is, than fancy wrapping and tying—during the dinner-hour. But this sad little idea, along with Charles's privileged segregation in the counting-house recess, soon proved incompatible with the conduct of business, and "it was not long, before Bob Fagin and I, and another boy [called Poll Green], . . . worked generally, side by side. Bob Fagin was an orphan, and lived with his brother-in-law, a waterman." Poll Green's father worked at Drury-Lane theater, and Poll's little sister, "did imps in the pantomimes." All innocent and pleasant enough in tone, and so it must have seemed to those who worked with or observed the small twelve-year-old briskly performing among the pots and paste.

But it did not seem that way from the inside, and Dickens's very next sentence reveals in stark dialectical terms the other side of the reality he was experiencing.

> No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these everyday associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written.

These are certainly the emotions of Oliver Twist, but, the reader is entitled to ask, what "happier childhood" did the workhouse orphan, unlike his creator, have to look back to? We will, I think, be able presently to account for this discrepancy.

Nevertheless, Charles held a special "station" at the warehouse and was treated "as one upon a different footing from the rest." At the same time, he

> never said, to man or boy, how it was that I came to be there, or gave the least indication of being sorry that I was there. That I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. . . . But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first, that if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skillful with my hands, as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as "the young gentleman."

Two of the older men occasionally called him Charles, but "it was mostly when we were very confidential, and when I had made some efforts to entertain them over our work with the results of some of the old readings, which were fast perishing out of my mind. Poll Green uprose once, and rebelled against the 'young gentleman' usage; but Bob Fagin settled him speedily."

Amidst the pathos and ambiguity of emotion in such passages, the myriad analogies between this experience and *Oliver Twist* are unmistakable. The differences are equally informing: in *Oliver Twist* it is Fagin and the Dodger who do the entertaining, who provide the gaiety amid the novel's darkness; in real life it was the deserted, neglected, suffering child—that is to say the latent novelist, the person who created Fagin and had Fagin within him—who did the entertaining. Oliver Twist suffers exquisitely and in public, and would have become the world's most incompetent pickpocket had he ever permitted himself to really learn; in life, the suffering was concealed, the dexterity was open and pronounced (in later years Dickens was a brilliant amateur magician) and aggressive. Oliver tells us what Dickens suffered passively; but Dickens also had Jack Hawkins, the Artful Dodger, master pickpocket and comic genius hidden within him.

BUT THERE is that line about Bob Fagin cutting short Poll Green's rebellion against the status of "the young gentleman." In the

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novel Fagin's role is to be tempter and corruptor; his intention is to make Oliver into a thief and so deprive him of his birthright, for he is in fact the son of a gentleman and will inherit his father's estate "only on the stipulation that in his minority he should never have stained his name with any public act of dishonor, meanness, cowardice, or wrong." That Oliver knows nothing of this until the very end is characteristic of the novel's miraculous and parabolic machinery, and also serves to remind us that in writing it Dickens had more things in mind than an imaginative recreation of his autobiography. Yet Fagin's method—his style of tempting and corrupting Oliver—is, at first, to use friendliness, warmth, and protectiveness; the escaped workhouse orphan, "a poor houseless, wandering boy, without a friend to help him, or a roof to shelter his head," isolated and alienated in an alienating world, finds his first shelter and affection in the person of "the merry old gentleman." This very affection, the thing Oliver most wants and needs, is at the same time the greatest threat to his moral existence. To trust in it and to return it would be to betray his unknown father and his unknown birthright. And so young Charles must have felt about Bob Fagin's benevolent and protective interferences on his behalf; the paradox, of course, was that Bob was acting to preserve "the young gentleman's" status, while Fagin's amicable devices have the opposite purpose. Furthermore, friendship with Bob Fagin, the brother-in-law of a waterman, would in Charles's condition have been equivalent to an admission that his lostness and desolation were not merely real but somehow permanent.

This acute and profound ambivalence received fuller expression in the course of Charles's experience at the warehouse. Cheerful, skillful, and resourceful as he was and strove to be, his inner sufferings could not be wholly denied, and he was seized repeatedly with his "old disorder." On the occasion of a particularly bad attack, he says,

> Bob Fagin was very good to me. . . . I suffered such excruciating pain that time, that they made a temporary bed of straw . . . and I rolled on the floor, and Bob filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to my side, half the day.

Toward evening he began to feel better.

> But Bob (who was much bigger and older than I) did not like the idea of my going home alone, and took me under his protection. I was too proud to let him know about the prison; and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin in his goodness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark-bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house.

Oliver Twist, the workhouse boy, is the son of a gentleman; and it is Fagin's task to prevent him from discovering that secret and entering upon that salvation. In life, young Charles Dickens was the son of a gentleman who was at the time inhabiting comfortable but close apartments in the Marshalsea prison; and it is *he* who keeps the secret from Fagin. The shame of admitting this secret is, in part, transformed in the novel into Oliver's incorruptibility and innocence, his instinctive repugnance for lying or stealing: so strangely are some of our virtues derived. In both instances, however, the danger is connected with a companionship or affection which is at once needed and intolerable; Bob Fagin's protectiveness is transformed into Fagin's treacherous maternal care.

This episode reverberates in many other ways in *Oliver Twist*—the knocking at the door, for example, turns up properly transformed. Fagin's final grand plot to destroy Oliver is to send him into the country as Bill Sikes's assistant in a breaking-and-entering job. Terrorized, Oliver goes along, though inwardly resolved to alarm the family. However, he is immediately discovered, is shot in the dark, and hauled back out. The robbers flee carrying the wounded boy but are forced to leave him in a ditch. Oliver lies there insensible till dawn; then he rouses himself and begins to "stumble onward, he knew not whither." He staggers on, sees a house; it happens to be the one broken into the night before; terrified, he has neither strength to fly nor a place to fly to. He makes it to the door, knocks, and collapses; he has committed

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himself to fate. Who lives in this house? The Maylies—who turn out to be his own true family. So, an innocent lie, told to protect a poor boy's pride and shame from the meddling of a kindly and curious Bob Fagin, and sealed by a knock on some stranger's door, turns out in the novel to be the poor boy's deliverance: the innocent lie becomes Oliver's coercion into the burglary; the knock on the door which permitted him to keep his father's imprisonment a secret becomes the knock on the door which leads him to his family, his father, and his identity. Oliver Twist endures his trial, discovers who his father is, and is confirmed in his identity by the discovery—the "parish Boy's progress" ends in the knowledge that he is the son of a gentleman, something few readers by that point would dare to doubt. Charles Dickens, "the young gentleman," kept his father's disgrace a secret from Bob Fagin, and was confirmed in the concealment; that refusal to betray his father—and his father in himself—even as he, young Charles, felt betrayed and abandoned by him, is one of his chief sources of strength as a novelist. And the conflict from which this strength emerges—his relation to his father—supplies what I believe to be the master theme of Dickens's novels.

Yet if we return to this incident from Dickens's young life, we are struck by what he called the "finishing piece of reality," his knocking at the door and asking "if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house." It is a fine piece of audacity and presence of mind: certainly it is something we cannot imagine Oliver Twist ever doing. But we can imagine the Artful Dodger or Fagin—if he could get away with it—doing it; in fact, it is precisely the kind of thing that Fagin puts Nancy up to do in order to recapture Oliver. The ruse that Charles invented to escape from Bob Fagin's friendly clutches is transformed in *Oliver Twist* into one of the devices that Fagin commands against the orphan boy.

We see, then, that Dickens's recreation in the novel of his boyhood experience has a tolerable inner coherence. In particular, his mixed attitudes toward Bob Fagin and Fagin seem up to a point remarkably congruent. When as a small boy, Dickens told Forster, he was taken for a walk through a criminal district of London, he felt "a profound attraction of repulsion." This phrase fairly suggests something of Dickens's attitude toward Fagin, and toward Bob Fagin too, although it might be more precise to say that toward Bob he felt the reverse, a profound repulsion of attraction. Yet if we could do no more than demonstrate that Dickens had transposed what he felt about Bob Fagin onto the figure of Fagin, we would not have advanced very far in our understanding of the fictional Fagin. We might of course go through *Oliver Twist* in tedious detail, exhibiting how in literally scores of places Dickens was imaginatively alluding to events from his boyhood. But this would in itself bring us no nearer to a solution of the problem. Bob Fagin, after all, was a boy, however much bigger, older, and tougher than Charles he might have seemed. Fagin is a terrible old man, Jew, devil, demon, and master-criminal. The difference remains large.

III

Bob Fagin is mentioned once more, toward the end of the autobiographical fragment. Sometime during Charles's period of employment, but after his father had been released from prison, Warren's moved their premises. Several windows of the new building looked out on a busy street. "Bob Fagin and I," Dickens writes, "had attained to great dexterity in tying up the pots, I forget how many we could do, in five minutes." For the sake of light, the two boys worked together at one of the windows, "and we were so brisk at it, that the people used to stop and look in. Sometimes there would be quite a little crowd there. I saw my father coming in at the door one day when we were very busy, and I wondered how he could bear it." This is a puzzling little scene. It seems at once flat and over-intense; it is characterized by extreme, if unarticulated, ambivalence: pride in dexterity and shame over the work; pleasure in skillful performance before a crowd or "audience," yet anxiety and humiliation at being observed or seen; and of course an utter mélange of feelings about being seen by his father. Young Charles had hidden from Bob Fagin the fact that his father's home, and thus in a sense his own, was a prison; now, his father came publicly to his son's place of degradation and saw

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him exposed to full view in the company of Bob Fagin.

The sense one has of emotions so intense as to be almost incoherent is strengthened by what follows. Dickens's father apparently "could bear it," at least for a while. But "at last, one day," he writes, "my father, and the relative so often mentioned, quarrelled." It was by letter, which Charles carried, and the quarrel, he says, was very fierce. "It was about me. It may have had some backward reference, in part, for anything I know, to my employment at the window." This is the purest conjecture, as Dickens himself admits; but we should note that he is connecting this climactic scene with the previous one about being seen in the window. All Dickens was "certain of," he says, is that he gave his relative the note; soon after (how long? the same day? next week?) the relative told him that he was "very much insulted about me," and that Charles would have to leave the warehouse. At that the boy broke down: "I cried very much, partly because it was so sudden, and partly because in his anger he was violent about my father, though gentle to me." And then, "with relief so strange that it was like oppression, I went home." The incoherence of this memory, along with Dickens's unsupported but wishful association of it with the scene at the window, lead me to suggest that the entire incident and Dickens's memory of it are what is known in psychoanalysis as "overdetermined": a multiplicity of meanings and motives converge upon an event, charging its separate elements with significances which refer elsewhere and to other things. This episode of young Charles, Bob Fagin, John Dickens, and the window has, I believe, the character of what is called a "screen memory." But in order to discover what it is screening we must turn back to the novel.

There are two passages in *Oliver Twist* which have always struck me as being out of place in the sense that they do not emerge out of any inner logic or necessity of the story but seem to have been written by Dickens because what he was about to describe had some special private resonance. In both Dickens ceases momentarily to speak as the impersonal narrator and addresses the reader in a personal, essayistic, and almost musing voice; both act as preludes to a scene between Oliver and Fagin; both are connected with an experience of sleep; both also contain "illogical" or "false" details in the sense that something mysterious happens in each which Dickens fails subsequently to clear up. They are in fact the same scene, though they are separated by two hundred pages, and each contains elements which augment or complete the other.

THE FIRST of these scenes occurs on the morning after Oliver has first been introduced to Fagin's den. The boys have gone out, Fagin is boiling coffee for breakfast, and Oliver is on the point of waking, but is still half-asleep. Dickens goes on to describe this condition:

> There is a drowsy state, between sleeping and waking, when you dream more in five minutes with your eyes half open, and yourself half conscious of everything that is passing around you, than you would in five nights with your eyes fast closed, and your senses wrapt in perfect unconsciousness. At such times, a mortal knows just enough of what his mind is doing to form some glimmering conception of its mighty powers, its bounding from earth and spurning time and space, when freed from the restraint of its corporeal associate.

Dickens is representing what is now called a "hypnagogic" phenomenon, that condition between sleep and waking when the conscious mind and its censor relax and unconscious processes and impulses become more than usually accessible. Oliver is in that half-state, apparently asleep and yet able to see and hear Fagin. Fagin looks at him, calls him by name, and when the boy does not answer, locks the door, draws forth from the trap-door "a small box" which he lays on the table and then takes out of it gold watches, "sparkling with jewels," and "rings, brooches, bracelets, and other articles of jewellery," while he chuckles with pleasure over his late cohorts who hanged without "peaching" on him. He then takes out another trinket which seems to have "some very minute inscription on it," which he pores over "long and earnestly." Suddenly—

> his bright dark eyes, which had been staring vacantly before him fell on Oliver's face; the boy's eyes were fixed on his in mute curiosity; and although the recognition was only for an instant—for the brief-

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> est space of time that can possibly be conceived—it was enough to show the old man that he had been observed. He closed the lid of the box with a loud crash; and laying his hand on a bread knife which was on the table, started furiously up.

He questions Oliver about what he has seen, and whether he was awake an hour ago. Oliver, in his stupefaction or his innocence, has seen nothing or understands nothing of what he has seen, and the scene ends inconsequentially.

The second scene takes place two hundred pages later. Oliver has been rescued and restored by the Maylies; they have retired to the country where Oliver is learning to read better and to write, and has his own "little room" on the ground floor at the back of the house "in which he was accustomed to sit, when busy at his books." It looks out onto a small garden. One summer evening, Oliver sits at this window "intent upon his books. He had been poring over them for some time . . . he had exerted himself a great deal . . . [and] gradually and by slow degrees, he fell asleep." At this point Dickens enters upon a second explanation of the hypnagogic phenomenon:

> There is a kind of sleep that steals upon us sometimes, which, while it holds the body prisoner, does not free the mind from a sense of things about it, and enable it to ramble at its pleasure. So far as an overpowering heaviness, a prostration of strength, and an utter inability to control our thoughts or power of motion, can be called sleep, this is it; and yet, we have a consciousness of all that is going on about us, and, if we dream at such a time, words which are really spoken, or sounds which really exist at the moment, accommodate themselves with surprising readiness to our visions, until reality and imagination become so strangely blended that it is afterwards almost matter of impossibility to separate the two. Nor is this, the most striking phenomenon incidental to such a state. It is an undoubted fact, that although our senses of touch and sight be for the time dead, yet our sleeping thoughts, and the visionary scenes that pass before us, will be influenced and materially influenced, by *the mere silent presence* of some external object; which may not have been near us when we closed our eyes, and of whose vicinity we have had no waking consciousness.
>
> Oliver knew, perfectly well, that he was in his own little room; that his books were lying on the table before him; that the sweet air was stirring among the creeping plants outside. And yet he was asleep. Suddenly the scene changed; the air became close and confined; and he thought, with a glow of terror, that he was in the Jew's house again. There he sat, the hideous old man, in his accustomed corner, pointing at him, and whispering to another man, with his face averted, who sat beside him. [This is Monks, Oliver's legitimate half-brother, who has enlisted Fagin in his scheme to destroy Oliver.]

They discuss him for a moment, and then Oliver wakes, and

> There—there—at the window, close before him—so close, that he could have almost touched him before he started back: with his eyes peering into the room, and meeting his: there stood the Jew. . . .
>
> It was but an instant, a glance, a flash, before his eyes; and they were gone. But they had recognized him, and he them: and their look was as firmly impressed upon his memory, as if it had been deeply carved in stone, and set before him from his birth. He stood transfixed for a moment; then, leaping from the window into the garden, called loudly for help.

Help arrives, but the two cannot be traced; indeed their footprints cannot even be found, and this detail, like that of the trinket which Fagin pores over in the previous scene, is never explained.

THESE scenes have in common several elements: a boy in a state of sleep or half-sleep in which conscious and unconscious impressions, fantasies and realities, dreams and recollections, tend to be fused and confused; supervening on this is an intense experience of watching and of being watched, which then gives way to emotions of threat and terror. In one scene there are the jewel box and the trinkets and the brandished knife; in the other the book and the window. I think that we are witness here to the decomposed elements of what Freud called the primal scene, to either a memory or fantasy of it: the child asleep, or just waking, or feigning sleep while observing sexual intercourse between his parents, and, frightened by what he sees or imagines, is either then noticed by the parents or has a fantasy of

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what would occur if he were noticed. The symbolism of the jewel box and the knife in the first scene are self-explanatory; for the window and the book we recur to the scene in the window at the blacking factory, and behind it, perhaps, to Dickens's earlier recollection of himself as a small boy on "a summer evening . . . sitting on my bed, reading as if for life."

Dickens's experience of desolation, fear, and anguish during the months of his father's imprisonment and his employment at the factory had the effect of re-awakening and reviving in him similar emotions which he, like every child, experienced at an earlier age, the age when parents seem like gods, giants, and demons. Indeed, the trauma of the London experiences was so acute that in a peculiar sense it seemed to absorb and obliterate his earlier life. Dickens was not, after all, a young child when he came to live in London—he was eleven years old. And yet it is an interesting fact that he was rarely able to write with conviction or credibility about life outside the city. "The memories which peaceful country scenes call up," he says in *Oliver Twist,* "are not of this world, nor of its thoughts and hopes." However we may regard them, he goes on, "there lingers, in the least reflective mind, a vague and half-formed consciousness of having held such feelings long before, in some remote and distant time, which calls up solemn thoughts of distant times to come." The paradise or Eden of infancy which we all have known and out of which we create all our ideas of supernal happiness are, in other words, a foretaste of heaven; but Dickens seems uncertain whether these are memories of anything he ever actually experienced. It was almost as if the months in London had canceled or cut him off from the reality of his earlier life, even while they reactivated other emotions and memories from that same period.

The scene of young Charles and Bob Fagin at the window being suddenly seen by Dickens's father—to which Charles responded so strongly—acted as a screen for earlier thoughts of being suddenly seen in an exposed and dangerous situation; and very likely as a screen for memories of the reverse situation of suddenly *seeing* something that is dangerous. (The two cannot in fact be separated, as in *Oliver Twist* they are not.) It seems clear, therefore, that the Bob Fagin whose friendship contained the threat of exposure, and the father whose freedom was a fraud and an outrage while his son slaved in a window, coalesced in Dickens's mind. But they coalesced into an image which has its origin in an earlier phase of Dickens's development, a phase which the London experience re-awakened and which the scene at the window both refers to and conceals. This is the image of the father of infancy and earliest childhood. And it is at this point that Fagin, the terrible, frightening old Jew, becomes relevant. For the traditional popular mythology of the Jew as Devil and Anti-Christ, as the castrator and murderer of good little Christian boys, corresponds itself to this image of the terrible father of infancy and of our primal fantasies, and is indeed one of western culture's chief expressions of it.*

The argument I have been proposing would be less convincing if these were the only examples from Dickens's writings of such scenes. But the fact is that variations of this scene recur in Dickens repeatedly; moreover, the image of being closely watched, stared at, and suddenly surrounded by glaring eyes appears with obsessive frequency in Dickens's novels. There are, in addition, two other instances in *Oliver Twist,* both of which support the point I have been trying to make.

BEFORE unconscious ideas or memories are permitted to emerge into consciousness, they are made to undergo certain disguises and distortions—such as condensation, decomposition, displacement, reversal, or multiplication. In the two scenes from *Oliver Twist,* which I have discussed as expressing a primal fantasy or recollection of Dickens's, one thing seems missing. Except for a symbolic representation in the jewel box and the trinkets inside it which Fagin hoards and caresses, there is no direct representation either of the primal act itself or of the other partner in the act. In the mind of a very small child, we know, sexual intercourse is first apprehended as a form of violence, spe-

* See Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare* and Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* for exhaustive and illuminating interpretations of this subject.

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cifically of murder, inflicted by the male upon the female. There is such a scene in *Oliver Twist*, one of its most famous, the murder of Nancy by Bill Sikes—and in this connection, it is relevant to observe that Sikes kills her because he believes she has betrayed him out of her affection for Oliver. It is after he has clubbed her to death that the image of the staring eyes reappears. Sikes throws a rug over her corpse, "but it was worse to fancy the eyes, and imagine them moving toward him, than to see them glaring upward." He flees the city and wanders about the country all day, but is pursued by "a vision . . . as constant and more terrible than that from which he had escaped." Then follows one of Dickens's incomparable passages:

> Those widely staring eyes, so lustreless and so glassy, that he had better borne to see them than think upon them, appeared in the midst of darkness; light in themselves, but giving light to nothing. There were but two, but they were everywhere. If he shut out the sight, there came the room with every well-known object . . . each *in its* accustomed place. The body was in *its* place, and its eyes were as he saw them when he stole away. He got up, and rushed into the field without. The figure was behind him. He re-entered the shed, and shrunk down once more. The eyes were there, before he had laid himself along.

He flees again, "flying from memory and himself," but is pursued by the vision, and finally by that hydra-headed and argus-eyed great beast, the London mob. At the end, surrounded by "tiers and tiers of faces in every window," by people fighting each other "only for an instant to see the wretch," he tries to escape across the roof-tops and lower himself by a rope into a ditch. Suddenly he looks behind him, cries out, "The eyes again," loses his balance, is caught in the noose of the rope, and hangs himself. "He fell for five-and-thirty feet. There was a sudden jerk, a terrific convulsion of the limbs; and there he hung, with the open knife clenched in his stiffening hand." Without pausing to analyse, we can see how recurrent and how suggestive in their recurrence are the elements of these episodes.

The second additional instance is the great scene of Fagin's trial, and now it is Fagin who is the object of this frightful scrutiny.

> The court was paved, from floor to roof, with human faces. Inquisitive and eager eyes peered from every inch of space. From the rail before the dock, away into the sharpest angle of the smallest corner in the galleries, all looks fixed upon one man—Fagin. Before him and behind: above, below, on the right and on the left: he seemed to stand surrounded by a firmament, all bright with gleaming eyes.
>
> He stood there, in all this glare of living light, with one hand resting on the wooden slab before him, the other held to his ear. . . .

Sikes and Fagin, both of them figures who threaten to ruin, castrate, and destroy Oliver, are now in Oliver's place; and the reader's emotions are enlisted in their terror, as they were in Oliver's. What has happened here is too intricate and compressed for simple analysis, but it is essential to note again the identification Dickens dramatically asserts between Oliver on the one hand and Fagin and Sikes on the other—and by inevitable implication between himself and his father. It is essential because otherwise we would be unable to understand how it is that Fagin, inhuman monster that he is, is also human and charming and an imaginative triumph. Part of the answer, I believe, has to do with the fact that at the deeper levels of his being Dickens maintained and had access to a feeling of identity with his father, even with that father who appeared to him as destroyer and betrayer of his son. His father was alive in him, as was Fagin, and in creating Fagin Dickens affirmed that fact as much as he negated it.

Two MORE bits of evidence and we are done. While Dickens was writing *Oliver Twist* he was afflicted with a return of his boyhood illness. The spasms came on him with particular severity while he was writing the final, climactic parts of the novel, and he understood this, he wrote, as "the penalty for sticking so close to Oliver." He was to pay one further penalty. Years later, toward the end of his career, Dickens embarked upon a series of public readings from his works. He was a superb actor and reader, and the accounts of these performances are uniform in their praise of his brilliance and

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power. He eventually decided to make some readings from *Oliver Twist,* choosing a series of scenes from it which ended in Fagin's betrayal of Nancy, the murder of Nancy, and Sikes's flight and death. He was at first reluctant to read these particular passages because he thought they might make too horrifying an impression on his impressionable Victorian audiences. And the impression they did make was from all accounts extravagant: women fainting and being carried from the auditorium "stiff and rigid" came to be a preposterous matter of course. But the impression they made on Dickens was more profound, and disastrous. They became an obsession with him; he read them more than any of his other selections; and he killed himself by means of them. After each reading of the scenes from *Oliver Twist* he was literally prostrated; his pulse would rise to 120 and above; it would take ten or fifteen minutes before he could utter a rational or coherent phrase. In already uncertain health, he was advised by his family, friends, and physicians to stop this suicidal pursuit. Yet he would not and could not, and at last it killed him.

This culminating episode of Dickens's career has been much discussed; various explanations of it have been advanced, none of which is really satisfactory. I think that now we can understand it better. In returning at the end of his life to *Oliver Twist,* Dickens was returning to his first and most intense representation of the crisis of his young boyhood. But he was also returning to events in the still more remote past, events which had been re-aroused by the months of suffering in the blacking factory, and which were both expressed and concealed in his recollection of them and in *Oliver Twist.* These events we all experience, and most of us then forget them forever. It was part of Dickens's destiny as a genius, part of the pain as well as the glory, that it was not given to him to "forget" such things in the way it is to most. They recurred in him, they spoke through him, he wrote them out symbolically, he acted them out, and still they recurred, and still he was bitterly loyal to them—they were, after all, himself. Dickens is one of the heroes of literature, and if my interpretation of these events in his life is persuasive, it is possible to see something heroic even in his self-destruction. Blind and unknowing as his struggle was on the level of consciousness, he was at least struggling with the depths of his being—the same depths that exist in all of us. That he remained until death engrossed in his most primitive and vital conflicts may also add to our understanding of his extraordinary development as a novelist: to remain in touch with vital conflicts is to remain in touch with vital feelings, with one's roots in life.

WHAT, THEN, have we accomplished? We have, I believe, accounted in some degree for the genesis of Fagin, demonstrating how various details of Dickens's experience were brought together in him. That the part of Fagin which is Jewish turns out to be not merely minor but almost fortuitous, or if not fortuitous then curiously unpremeditated in its mythological cast, and that Fagin's relations to Oliver are more paradoxical than might at first seem likely, is not really surprising. Similar things have been suspected before. But we have not accounted for the power of Fagin as an imaginative creation; we have not explained why this demonic, disgusting, and monstrous old man should be so fascinating, so comic, even so winning in his abominable wickedness. It will not do to invoke genius, which in this context is a convenient way of avoiding explanation—though Fagin is nothing if not a creation of genius. Perhaps the closest we can come to an answer is to say that the boy who suffered passively in the blacking warehouse, who grieved in solitude, and felt himself to be Oliver Twist, was also the boy who was not afraid to lie to protect his and his father's poor pride and shame, who acted out that lie with spirit and audacity, and who told stories to amuse and entertain his fellows in the warehouse. He went on lying and telling stories until he became one of the world's great masters of the art, and created those grand imaginative lies which in our perplexed condition somehow approximate the truth. Oliver Twist could never have imagined Fagin, and Dickens could neither have imagined nor created him had Fagin not been part of himself and had he been unable ever to affirm that part of himself with gusto and delight.

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The Perils of Political Empiricism

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

AMERICAN FOREIGN policy has in the past suffered from one major defect: the belief that a great power could somehow escape the risks and liabilities of foreign policy. It could escape them—so the belief ran—by isolating itself from the affairs of the world; if it abstained from pursuing active foreign policies vis-à-vis other nations, other nations would reciprocate. It could escape them by promoting a grand design, such as the League of Nations or the United Nations, which, in the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt, would make an end to "the system of unilateral action and exclusive alliances and spheres of influence and balances of power and all the other expedients which have been tried for centuries —and have failed." In other words the United Nations was expected to put an end to foreign policy itself.

We have learned the lesson that a great nation cannot escape the risks and liabilities of foreign policy by an act of will, by choosing either to retreat from foreign policy or to soar above it. Yet we are now in the process of going to the other extreme of surrendering piecemeal to the facts of foreign policy, of allowing ourselves to be sucked in by them, of thinking and acting as though there were nothing else to foreign policy but this particular set of empirical facts concerning, say, Laos or Cuba. The President has admonished us to "look at things as they are," and we are following his advice. We are doing so in the name of pragmatism or empiricism. Nowadays, these terms are used in Washington with pride. They are used as though to be pragmatic and empirical when faced with a political problem were to be rational almost by definition. The idea which the pragmatists and empiricists want to convey is that they are neither escapists nor utopians, that they have no illusions about the facts as they are nor any grand design for changing them; they have the courage to look the facts in the face and the willingness and ability to deal with each issue on its own terms. There is more truth in this claim than merit.

This new attitude toward foreign policy stems from an intellectual disposition which is deeply embedded in the American folklore of social action. That disposition shuns elaborate philosophies and consistent theories. It bows to the facts which are supposed to "tell their own story" and "not to lie." It accepts only one test of the truth of a proposition: that it works. It expects the problems of the social world to yield to a series of piecemeal empirical attacks, unencumbered by preconceived notions and comprehensive planning. If a social problem proves obstinate, it must be made to yield to a new empirical attack, armed with more facts more thoroughly understood.

That theory of social action, however persuasive it may sound to our ears by virtue of being apparently supported by our domestic experience, is in truth without foundation. Facts have no social meaning in themselves. It is the significance we attribute to certain facts of our sensory experience—in terms of our hopes and fears, our memories, intentions, and expectations—that creates them as social facts. The social world itself, then, is but an artifact of man's mind, the reflection of his thoughts and the creation of his actions.

Every social act (and even our awareness of empirical data as social facts) presupposes a theory of society, however unacknowledged, inchoate, and fragmentary.

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It is not given to us to choose between a social philosophy and an unconditional surrender to the facts as they are. Rather we must choose between a philosophy consistent within itself and founded on experience, which can serve as a guide to understanding and an instrument for successful action, and an implicit and untested philosophy which is likely to blur understanding and mislead action. The Wilsonian grand design and the isolationist abstentionism missed the mark in their refusal, each in its own way, to take account of the concrete facts of the political situation. The empiricism of our day, on the other hand, has been led astray by its total absorption in the empirical facts of particular situations.

THUS WE DEAL with Laos on its own terms, we deal with Vietnam on its own terms, we deal with Taiwan on its own terms. And we deal with Communist China on its own terms. We want to neutralize Laos, even at the risk of partial or complete Communist domination. We want to win the civil war in Vietnam, even at the risk of a full military commitment on the part of the United States. We want to maintain the status quo in the straits of Taiwan, even at the risk of war with China. And we want to contain Chinese power within its present territorial limits by committing ourselves to the defense of military positions scattered around the periphery of the Chinese empire, regardless of the over-all distribution of military power between China and the rest of the world.

It stands to reason that all these issues are interconnected and that their connection is of a hierarchical nature. The paramount issue, in the long run at the very least, is the peripheral containment of China. Will it be possible, once China has become a first-rate military power and, more particularly, has acquired an arsenal of nuclear weapons, to contain her within the present territorial limits of her power by continuing to commit American military strength to the support of her neighbors? Or will it then be necessary to strike at the heart of Chinese power itself? If this should prove to be necessary, as I indeed think it will—if, in other words our present policy of peripheral containment will either fail or involve us sooner or later in an all-out war with China, it is necessary to ask now, not five or ten years from now when circumstances may have given the answer and left us no choice, two fundamental questions. First, what is the place of the containment of China within the hierarchy of the objectives of our foreign policy, especially in view of our relations with the Soviet Union? And second, if we assign to the containment of China a very high priority, worth the risk of all-out war, must we delay fighting this inevitable war until China feels strong enough to wage it on terms favorable to herself, or ought we not to fight it under conditions most favorable to ourselves?

These are indeed unpleasant and hence unpopular questions, and since they became acute twelve years ago in consequence of the Korean war, no administration has seen fit to raise them in public. Nor has any administration come to terms with them in its secret councils—if the actions of successive administrations give any clue to the over-all conception which has guided our Asian policies. The conduct of the Korean war and the origin of the Laotian crisis are cases in point. The Chinese intervention in the Korean war, being the inevitable response to our advance to the Yalu, could take us by surprise only because it did not occur to us to consider our Korean policy as an integral part of our relations with China. Similarly, our decision to replace the neutralist government of Laos with a pro-Western one, initiated in 1960 against the advice of our ambassador and the CIA agents in Laos, was predicated upon the unrealistic assumption that such an attempt to change the status quo in favor of the West might not call forth from the Communist neighbors of Laos a counter-attempt —and one more likely to succeed in view of the distribution of local power—to change the status quo in *their* favor.

Just as our policies in Southeast Asia and the straits of Taiwan must be seen in the context of our over-all relations with China, so our policies in the different nations of Southeast Asia are themselves organically interconnected. Since we are committed to the military defense of South Vietnam—a commitment whose soundness I recently questioned in these pages*—how can we reconcile ourselves at the same time to the

* "Vietnam—Another Korea?" May 1962.

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Communization of, at the very least, those parts of Laos adjacent to South Vietnam? For our Vietnamese policy, questionable on other grounds, is doomed to failure by our Laotian policy, which provides the Vietnamese guerrillas with a supply and staging area beyond the borders of Vietnam. The Greek and Algerian civil wars have shown in different ways that guerrillas who have the support of the indigenous population cannot be defeated so long as they can be supplied from, and retreat to, areas beyond the borders of their native country.

WHAT AILS our Asian policy is its fragmentation, its compartmentalization into localized policies, independent of each other and of an over-all conception which would assign them their proper place in the total scheme of things. That ailment, however, is not limited to our Asian policy. It impedes our policies elsewhere and cramps the very style of our foreign policy. Berlin and our relations with our allies are cases in point.

It is of course obvious that the issue of the Western presence in West Berlin can no more be dealt with as a local problem, isolated from the over-all relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, than the issue of Taiwan can be considered in isolation from the over-all relations between the United States and China. Khrushchev raised the Berlin question in order to compel the United States to settle on Soviet terms the issue which has been the main concern of Soviet foreign policy since the end of the Second World War and to which the very origin of the cold war can be traced: American recognition of the Western boundaries of the Soviet empire.

With regard to this issue the United States can pursue one of two alternative policies. It can continue its present policy of non-recognition of the territorial status quo in Central Europe as a matter of law while implicitly recognizing it as a matter of political and military fact, unchangeable short of a victorious war. This policy becomes increasingly precarious in the measure that the independent military power of West Germany provides support for a revisionist policy. The other alternative is for the United States to embark upon a new policy of at least edging toward the reconciliation of its explicit policy of non-recognition with its implicit recognition of the territorial status quo in Central Europe.

Our Berlin policy, soundly conceived, is a symbolic manifestation of our over-all German policy and of our over-all relations with the Soviet Union. Yet, unwilling to face the realities of the German problem, we have either endeavored to manipulate the modalities of our presence in West Berlin in isolation from the underlying issue, or we have refused to engage in serious negotiations altogether, committing ourselves to the defense of the status quo in Berlin without really intending thereby to put into question the territorial status quo in Central Europe. In consequence, the Berlin issue is at the moment of this writing as unresolved as it was when it was first raised by Khrushchev in November 1958, and our position with regard to the territorial status quo in Central Europe remains as ambiguous as it was fifteen years ago.

This refusal to face the problem of Germany and this tendency to approach the Berlin issue as though it could be dealt with in isolation from the German problem, are in good measure due to the virtual veto with which the government of West Germany has been able to paralyze our German policy and stalemate our relations with the Soviet Union. Our relations with West Germany are duplicated by our relations with many of our other allies, such as Taiwan, South Vietnam, Laos, Pakistan, France. These allies either prevent us from pursuing the policies we would want to pursue, or else they pursue policies of their own which run counter to our own interests and expressed preferences.

Chiang Kai-shek has put some of his best troops on the off-shore islands, and we have been unable to persuade him to desist from that folly. President Diem of South Vietnam bears the major share of responsibility for the disintegration of his regime and the advances of Communism, but we have been unable to make him change his policies. The policies which Pakistan has been pursuing toward its neighbors Afghanistan and India have been a continuous irritant in our relations with those nations, but we have been unable to do anything about them. The policies of France have only by coincidence any relation to our inter-

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ests and preferences. The policies Great Britain and Canada are pursuing vis-à-vis China run counter to our own and reduce their effectiveness; and so do the policies which Canada and some of our European allies pursue toward Cuba. While in theory we intend to give economic aid only to nations which through political and economic reform have at least cleared the path toward economic development, in practice the threat of a recipient government to collapse or go Communist is generally sufficient to make us give without conditions.

WE HAVE TRIED to manipulate the acute manifestations of this endemic crisis in our alliances in two different ways: through ineffective persuasion or through enthusiastic surrender. We have made the subversion of our interests and the frustration of our policies by our allies tolerable by investing the interests and policies of our allies with a peculiar virtue. We have done so through the intermediary of our emotional commitment to certain rulers, such as Chiang Kai-shek, Diem, Ayub, and Franco. Some of our ambassadors have been emotionally committed to one or another of these rulers to such a scandalous extent that, instead of representing the interests and policies of the United States abroad, they have become the advocates in Washington of the policies and interests of the governments to which they are accredited.

These are not isolated acts of misguided individuals, to be remedied by changes in personnel. We are here in the presence of a persistent pattern which points to a flaw in our conception of what an alliance is about, of the interconnectedness of different alliances (such as our alliances with France and Germany) and, more particularly, of the relationship which ought to exist between members of an alliance who differ drastically in power. Again the remedy must be sought not in the manipulation of individual situations but in a revision of the modes of thought and action which we have brought to bear upon our alliances throughout the world. We could do worse than remember the warning of Washington's Farewell Address:

> So likewise, a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite Nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. . . . And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation) facility to betray, or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity. . . .

Our foreign policy, then, has disintegrated into a series of disconnected operations whose extent is determined by the facts of a particular crisis situation, be it Vietnam, Laos, or Berlin. It must be said in passing that this disintegration of substantive foreign policy is parallelled and accentuated by the *modus operandi* of the administration, which tends—through what I have called elsewhere* "the equalitarian diffusion of the advisory function"—to dissolve the powers of decision-making into a series of disconnected acts. Trying to escape the Scylla of utopianism and isolationism, we have come dangerously close to being swallowed by the Charybdis of empiricism. There is no middle ground: in order to escape the dilemma, we must—like Odysseus—sail ahead and leave it behind.

Historic experience indicates what our course must be. The statesmen who became masters of events and thus conscious creators of history—the Washingtons and the Lincolns, the Richelieus and the Bismarcks—had one quality in common: they combined a conscious general conception of foreign policy, of its direction and aim, with the ability to manipulate concrete circumstances in the light of that conception. In other words, Wilson had a point which Kennedy has missed, and vice versa. Without the grand design, informed by historic experience and seeking what is politically possible, foreign policy is blind; it moves without knowing where it is going. Without respect for facts and the ability to change them, foreign policy is lame; it cannot move in the direction the grand design has charted.

* See the *New Leader*, July 3 and 10, 1961.

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OBSERVATIONS

RABBINICAL RESPONSA IN THE USSR

Judah Sayer

In the spring of 1960, a friend of mine, an American who made frequent trips to the Soviet Union, entrusted to me a curious sheaf of Hebrew manuscripts. Several months later, I personally delivered the papers to the addressees: rabbinical scholars in Israel. What I handed over to them consisted of some twenty sheets of responsa—opinions on points of Jewish law—by Soviet rabbis, in several handwritings and on two kinds of paper: long, lined sheets, scissored from a schoolchild's notebook, which had been brought out from Russia by my friend, and regular old-fashioned letterfold sheets which had followed him in the mails after his departure, under the guise of family correspondence.

There was nothing subversive about these documents. They had been sent circuitously only because their authors knew that evidence of the mere functioning of Jewish religious law inside the Soviet Union, and of juridical consultations with rabbis abroad, could bring down disaster. The Soviet rabbis' purpose was innocent enough. Dealing in their responsa with several novel situations, they wished to place their own opinions before the larger synod of the world rabbinate. They were themselves too much a part of the Soviet circumstance to be aware, perhaps, how revealing the several situations they discussed were of the entire Soviet Jewish condition.

These were not the first responsa to have slipped out of the Soviet Union. Some came out in the 1920's and in the 1930's. But that, in the 1960's, there should still be Jews in the Soviet Union who seek rabbinical advice about Jewishness, and rabbis who offer it—including some extremely young rabbis—seems to me amazing. I have since learned that such recent Soviet responsa have been got hold of by others than myself. Some have even appeared in print, under their authors' names, in rabbinical periodicals both here and in Israel. But these have dealt with innocuous opinions on ritual—to which the Soviet authorities could hardly object. Their authors have been Rabbi Yehuda-Leib Levin, of the Moscow synagogue, and other "official rabbis" whose names show up repeatedly on Soviet Foreign Office releases denouncing Israeli "imperialism," acclaiming the paradisiacal state of Soviet Jewry, and exhorting Jews abroad to make "war on the warmongers." There is no intent here to prejudge such rabbis morally. A Talmudic adage says that you must not judge your fellow man until you have personally experienced his circumstances. Perhaps the Soviet "official rabbis" have found in their responsa on rituals a way of "keeping the embers of Judaism burning." The responsa we shall discuss here, however, are by men whose rabbinical status has probably been forgotten by the authorities, who indeed have spent a lifetime in other occupations, but who still function as supreme religious arbiters among those to whom they can make their opinions known.

Responsa literature has at least a fourteen-century tradition. It probably came into being as correspondence between the great Babylonian academies and the legal authorities in Palestine who retained their preeminence long after the destruction of the Second Temple and Jewry's total dispersal. Ultimately, when the Palestine center had fallen into complete decline, its authority passed on to the Babylonian academy heads, the Gaons, who were consulted even by the remote German and Far Eastern communities. Responsa are case law. No constitution or statutes can provide for all future contingencies and specific cases. The Talmud is a vast body of jurisprudence that itself reflects the accommodations of many generations to their times. The Talmudic exegetes reflect further accommodation and

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application. But each generation of rabbis since has been confronted by problems which no predecessors had to deal with. Hence if a rabbi was asked a *she'ela*—a question of law—that was new, and he was compelled to give a new *t'shuva*—response—he would write out his responsum and circulate it among his colleagues for their verification and endorsement, or for their edification. If his view was challenged, debate ensued, putting in circulation a kind of legal round-robin in which the entire rabbinate of the world engaged.

Responsa today are still living law for truly Orthodox Jews. They are certainly basic law to the closed Hasidic communities of Brooklyn and upstate New York, and to a majority of Orthodox Jewry in Israel. Even among the non-Orthodox rabbinate in America there has been a renascence of responsa interest. The Conservative rabbis have always taken Halachah—hence responsa—seriously. The Reform rabbinate initiated in Germany had disclaimed Oral Law but eventually accepted it, with radical modifications to be sure, in America. In recent years, Reform rabbis have shown an especially close interest in responsa. Halachah, in application, requires responsa—not necessarily as binding law, but as "guidance," to borrow the phrase from Rabbi Solomon Freehof, an eminent Reform authority and author of the fascinating volume *Responsa Literature* (Jewish Publication Society, 1955). I suspect that this revived interest by the non-Orthodox denominations is related to the *kulturkampf* in Israel. The Reform rabbinate is determined to prove that their interpretations of Jewish law derive from the same source as the Orthodox, and have an equal validity.

The first question posed concerning any responsa is whether they are compatible with the civil law. The principle on this point—and it has never been controverted—was already formulated in the 3rd century C.E. by the Babylonian Gaon Rabbi Samuel. He ruled that "the law of the kingdom is binding law," excepting, always, that which would compel Jews to disavow their faith. The richest responsa law has been created whenever Jews in any country were granted autonomous internal rule over their own community, the *kehillah;* and most of Diaspora Jewry enjoyed such autonomy up to the period of the Emancipation. Polish Jewry, from the mid-16th to the mid-18th centuries, provided an excellent example of self-government, with its federal legislature, Vaad Aratzot, its provincial legislatures, its two-tier judiciary, and its circuit and federal courts. Here was a period rich in responsa.

Early responsa encompassed everything: legal matters (e.g. involving contracts); questions of labor law and in some countries questions of criminal law (including capital offenses); philosophy; science. After the expulsion from Spain, Diaspora Jewry, suffering a deep depression, turned from free inquiry to mysticism; consequently, responsa became more purely judicial. Indeed, responsa literature has provided a valuable source of historical material on the customs, mores, and occupations not only of the Jews but also of the peoples among whom they lived. Historians of Polish Jewish life have drawn heavily on the responsa material, as have students of the history of the Spanish and French Jewries during the Middle Ages.

SEVERAL ERAS STAMP themselves with particular poignancy on the responsa literature. The Marrano period—analogous in many ways to the present Soviet period—began with the attempt of North African Moslem fanatics, the despoilers of Spanish Arabic culture, to compel Jews to the Moslem faith, and continued with the repeated attempts of the Christians to compel the Jews to Christianity. When Maimonides (1135–1204) was only a child, his family fled from Cordova to escape Islamization by the North African invaders. But when the family later, by peculiar circumstance, crossed over into Africa, it there apparently was forced to embrace Islam. Subsequently, Maimonides settled in Egypt. But while still in North Africa, he published an opinion taking sharp issue with a rabbinical authority who had denounced Islamized Jews as guilty of idolatry, which was a capital offense. Maimonides argued that Islam required merely the pronouncement of Mohammed's name, but not disavowal of the essentials of the Jewish faith and the worship of idols: hence those who became Islamized should be readmitted to the body of Israel. Martyrdom

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was meritorious and praiseworthy; but not all were capable of heroism, he explained.

Later generations had also to rule on forced apostasy to the Christian faith, and the responsa of the period were charitable toward forced *meshumadim,* baptized Jews, when they wished to revert to the fold. Rabbi Gershom, author of the ban on polygamy, and Rashi, the immortal exegete, were among the first to rule for their re-admission. (Rabbi Gershom's own son had converted under compulsion, but never asked to be re-admitted into Jewry.) Some Marranos, compelled by fear, converted more than once, back and forth, to Christianity and to Judaism. The issue was raised whether the church marriage of a husband and wife who wished to revert to Judaism was valid, and whether the children were legitimate. The church marriage was sometimes preceded by a secret Jewish wedding. The question of witnesses was posed regarding both ceremonies. The issue of witnesses, we shall see, has now also been raised in the Soviet responsa.

The 13th-century Rabbi Meir of Ruthenberg was a celebrated martyr who left a vast volume of responsa dealing with martyrdom. Caught in Lombardy in the act of leading a group of immigrants to Palestine, he was returned to Germany, where the Emperor Rudolph imprisoned him, but pledged to release him on payment of twenty thousand marks ransom. The Rabbi put the congregation under oath not to pay, lest a precedent be set for other rulers to impoverish Jewish communities by seizing their rabbis and holding them for outrageous ransom. Rabbi Meir died in his cell in the seventh year of his incarceration. Visited regularly by his disciples, he passed on through them his responsa in reply to queries addressed to him from many lands. This was the time when, rather than submit to apostasy, entire communities of Jews committed suicide. A man in one such community who had survived after destroying his wife and children sought penance. The martyred Rabbi Meir ruled that in killing those he loved the man had also destroyed himself. Captive women, after their release, were not permitted to their husbands since they might have been at the disposal, however much against their will, of other men. What of women released from a convent where they had been held in an attempt to convert them? These, Rabbi Meir ruled, were not captive women.

A rich store of what we might call frivolous responsa has been handed down from the 16th-century Venetian Jews. Was the use of a gondola, and card games if not for stakes, permitted on the Sabbath? Were Jews allowed to join a hunt? On the last, rabbinical opinion was undivided: Jews must not hunt.

The devastating Chmielniki-led pogroms in 17th-century Poland and the Ukraine again raised the poignant issue of captive women and of grass widows—*agunot*—who are not permitted by Jewish law to remarry without incontrovertible proof of their husbands' deaths. World War I and the subsequent civil war in Russia, and more recently the Nazi occupation, added to the voluminous responsa on this subject. The Soviets also made their contribution with the problem of *agunot* whose husbands had fallen into the hands of the secret police and disappeared without a trace. Earlier, America figured prominently. From the 1880's on, rabbinical responsa in European towns were much concerned with petitions of women whose husbands, having left for America, were never heard from again. To be sure, *Landsmanschaften,* the societies of people in America from the same home town, would often help the grass widows resolve the problem by tracing the vanished husbands and compelling them either to bring their wives over to America or grant them a *get,* a decree of divorce—generally there was another woman in the picture.

RESPONSA EMBRACE a wide range of social law. The famous Rabbi Mendel Krochmal of the 17th century, a member of the Polish Vaad Aratzot, declared for universal suffrage within the Jewish community when the poor petitioned against a community ruling which gave the vote only to persons in high tax brackets. German rabbis, seeking to protect the poor against an unequal burden, had in earlier responsa repeatedly ruled against personal exemptions granted by barons or kings to Jewish tax farmers in return for collecting the Jewish tax. Responsa also ruled firmly against informers —an issue again raised in Soviet responsa—

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and against those who accepted appointment to Jewish office from Christian authority without Jewish consent. Such instances of conflict between responsa rulings and civic law have inevitably occurred whenever the state has committed a flagrant injustice. Rabbi Moses Sofer, better known as Chatam Sofer, the name of the famous compendium of his responsa, set down a truly radical ruling (1809) during the Franco-Austrian war. The lower classes in Bratislava, where he lived, had been impoverished by bankers who foreclosed, black-marketeers who raised prices, and a government which taxed inexorably and unequally. Queried as to whether they must meet their financial obligations to the government, Chatam Sofer answered his impoverished petitioners that "state law is not binding law"—thus reversing the Babylonian Samuel's tradition that had been in effect for sixteen centuries. It was an emergency ruling, of course, but insurrectionist: the city was then under military law, and the rabbi would have faced a court martial if friends had not intervened for him at the royal court in Vienna.

IT IS AGAINST THIS background that we should consider the responsa which were forwarded through me to their Israeli destination. Was it permissible, the Soviet rabbis asked of their Israeli colleagues, to perform a marriage without the usually required number of witnesses? We have seen that this question of witnesses was raised, after the fact, in connection with Marrano marriages performed by the church: there the problem was knottier, the ruling more liberal. In the Soviet case, the question is brought up as a general one, and Soviet rabbinical opinion is split. Some insist on the full quorum, others waive it. What is involved is that some young Soviet Jews are prepared to submit to a religious marriage either out of conviction or to please their parents. But they risk expulsion from the party and economic downgrading, if discovered, and therefore cannot afford too many witnesses to the ceremony. In effect, then, responsa which rigidly insist on the provision of witnesses would serve to discourage religious marriages.

Another question, on the surface seemingly ritualistic, raises a dialectic issue and reveals the condition of Jewish religious observance in Russia. A Soviet postal employee, in the course of his routine duties, handled a shipment of *esrogim* that had been sent by the chief rabbinate of Israel as a gift to Soviet Jewry, which could not otherwise obtain them. The shipment was addressed to Rabbi Levin of the Moscow synagogue with the request that he see to its distribution. The fruit is part of the Succoth service, and the postal employee, hoping to delight the pietists in his hometown in the provinces, had removed one of the *esrogim* and sent it to his father. Afterward, he became worried. Would his people back home be so delighted if they learned that it was a stolen *esrog?* Jewish law disqualifies stolen objects for sacred uses: the end does not justify the means. But the responsum ruled that it was not a stolen object. The *esrog* was no longer the possession of the Israeli rabbinate, nor of the post office, which was a disinterested forwarding agent, nor of Rabbi Levin, who was likewise an agent. It was intended for the Soviet Jewish communities; the man's home town qualified for this designation. It was only necessary that Rabbi Levin be informed that the *esrog* he had perhaps missed had already reached its destination.

The issue of means and ends is raised in still another responsum, which reveals also the martyrdom of Jewish pietists under Soviet rule. A group of Orthodox Jews (including the author of this particular responsum), inmates of a Siberian forced labor camp assigned to felling trees for a railway clearing, decided to set up a *succah*. The commandant had granted them permission to use several planks from a pile in the yard. The planks were too long, so they cut them to size. Now Jewish law provides that a borrowed object must be returned in its original condition. Had they transgressed? The responsum ruled on two grounds that they had not. The planks were state property. The state is its citizenry. They are part of the citizenry. The planks, therefore, were their property. The second ground offered was that an object is not deemed borrowed unless it has been removed from the lender's possession. In this case, the planks had not been removed from the camp, hence not been borrowed, and what has not been borrowed cannot be re-

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turned, which disposes also of the question of original condition.

Another responsum tells how, in 1959 in the Ukraine, some Jewish elders had surrendered a synagogue—the responsum gives its name—to the municipal authorities who had threatened, otherwise, to forbid all public worship and even the private *minyan*. Pietists of the community had criticized the decision of the elders as a very serious breach, arguing, rather let all *minyanim* be shut down than give up the synagogue. They cited an ancient legal precedent: if an enemy besieges a city and demands the surrender of one individual on threat of decimating all, or the surrender of a certain woman on threat of violating all the women, the individual may not be surrendered—in the case of the woman, even if she be a harlot. The rabbinical responsum, conversely, approved the elders' action, on the ground that the original precedent did not hold here, since it dealt with the case where the person or persons being demanded could not be identified by the enemy, unless the city or congregation acted as informer. The synagogue, in the present case, is known to the authorities, and the surrender of its keys is only a technicality; it can be easily broken into. The responsum considers an auxiliary question. The synagogue would not be violated if used for storing grain for the populace, or some similar purpose; it *would* be desecrated if converted into a Komsomol club. However, even if the latter be the municipality's intent, the authorities, not the elders, are responsible. This raises an additional problem. The municipal officials did not comprehend the gravity of their deed, they were "like unto the blind." Had the Jewish elders, by handing over the keys, "placed obstacles before the blind"? No, the responsum ruled, since the officials were Gentiles, not bound by Jewish law.

Jews in a Rumanian city were forbidden by the authorities to celebrate collectively the *shalosh seudot*, the third Sabbath meal, which is eaten at dusk. Should they have defied the ban? The responsum ruled in the negative. Most commandments are suspended where human life is imperiled. The ill need not fast on Yom Kippur. If the head of a foetus has not yet emerged from the womb, it may be sacrificed to spare the mother's life. Only if a Jew is ordered to renounce his faith and worship idols, must he yield up his life: Sanctification of the Name. The Rumanian authorities claimed that their target in this case was not the Jewish faith. All public assemblies in the city had been banned for security reasons, and the *shalosh seudot* was classified as a public assembly, banned for this reason and no other—so the authorities said.

Sanctification of the Name is raised in yet another responsum. It reveals, *inter alia*, the working of popular anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. A Lithuanian Jew had migrated to Russia and obtained employment there, passing as a Lithuanian. Rabbi Israel Isserlein, in 15th-century Germany, had been asked whether Jews might pass as non-Jews in countries where they were forbidden to enter. The question in the Soviet responsum was whether, by passing as a Lithuanian, this Jew had renounced his faith? Renunciation would be unforgivable, even if life itself were imperiled. But here, the Jew from Lithuania would only have suffered ridicule from his fellow employees—at worst, dismissal from his job. The responsum ruled, however, that he had not been guilty of renouncing his faith. Asked where he had come from, he replied, "Lithuania": a true statement; asked his nationality, he also replied, "Lithuanian." Nationality is an ambiguous term—it has one meaning in some countries, another in others. Under Soviet law, nationality means descent, and the Jew had obviously denied his descent, but only under that law. Soviet questioners do not inquire about religion. On this score, the responsum acquits the Jew from Lithuania of renouncing his faith.

It is true that the sheaf I studied contained only a single responsum for each issue raised; we may assume that there were other responsa formulated on each of the questions, especially on the last, perhaps refuting the opinions here reported which exonerate the Lithuanian Jew. It must be remembered that no responsum is absolute law. This has been the case throughout Jewish history. A responsum can only be law where a single authority has been acknowledged by his colleagues as their absolute superior. But even Maimonides was not recognized by all, and was challenged by many.

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The impression conveyed by most of these responsa may be that the Soviet rabbis are quietists. Their very pursuance, tenacious and intransigent, of their function proves the contrary. One particular responsum indicates that some of these men—none an "official" rabbi—are skirting some very heroic enterprises. It deals with a "person who helped *talmidei chachamin* [scholars] across the border." Thus we learn of the underground smuggling of rabbis out of Russia. The Soviet secret police got on the trail of the "smuggler," and he fled for his life. A Jewish informer pursued him across the border, apparently into a satellite country. The issue of Jewish informers had already engaged responsa authors in medieval Germany. The manner in which the "smuggler's" encounter with the present Soviet Jewish informer was resolved is obliquely stated in the responsum: "The issue was life and death. It was self-defense."

THE SOVIET RABBINATE is of course at some disadvantage in considering current questions. Responsa are based on the Talmud, the exegetical literature, and fourteen centuries of case-law tradition, and Soviet rabbis can draw on little of all this. The Moscow synagogue is reputed to have a rich library. Talmudic folios, though probably little else, may be available also in synagogues in several other cities. But rabbis, especially non-official ones, in cities only infrequently visited by foreign tourists, have no facilities at all. Their private libraries were disposed of, even over their protests, by alarmed relatives during the presecutions of the last years of the Stalin regime, and cannot be restored. Hence, their Halachah—law—is truly Oral Law. Like the rabbis in medieval European cities after the confiscation and burning of the Talmud, they circulate in manuscript whatever they can recollect. The memories of some of these men have developed into virtual storehouses of Jewish jurisprudence. At least one rabbi has produced, working at first from memory alone, an entire commentary on the Talmud which may never see print. Some are afraid even today to preserve complete collections of their responsa and content themselves with putting into circulation single responsa as the various issues arise. A friend of mine recently met a Soviet rabbi whose legal and philosophical opinions were included in a collection of correspondence among Soviet rabbis published in Tel Aviv in the 1930's. The collection was titled *Letters of Research and Criticism on the Subject of Judaism and the Rabbinate in Our Times,* edited by the late Rabbi Shmuel Alexandrov of Bobruisk. The Soviet rabbi mentioned above had never seen the volume. "I should like to see the book," he mused. "I have retained no copy of my letters"; but he added as an afterthought, "If it contains any erroneous statement, I would rather you did not send it to me." My friend did not press him for an explanation; in the words of Ibn Ezra, "the perceptive will understand."

This Alexandrov correspondence which dates back to the first decade and a half of Communist rule, and the responsa I have seen which date through 1960, display a tendency toward a liberal application of Jewish law. Rabbi Alexandrov perhaps was the first to formulate such a policy in his advice to colleagues concerning a rabbi's conduct of his flock in the new Soviet society: "Instruct them in the love of Torah and the fear of God. Impose no obligations, post no demands, be not harsh with those who appear lax in the observance of the *mitzvot.*" Nor have even the underground rabbis been hostile to the Communist economic order. Jewish tradition has always been more concerned with man's dignity than with the state of his property, and some of these rabbis have even been sympathetic to the professed egalitarian purposes of Communism. But their one and abiding concern, from which nothing could deflect them, has been religious freedom, the right of men to live in accordance with the beliefs and ethical dictates of their religion. That and nothing else. In the USSR this is a great deal to ask. Hence, some of the rabbis have perished Sanctifying the Name.

JUDAH SAYER *is the pseudonym of an American commentator on Jewish affairs.*

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Love and Power

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read with interest Professor Morgenthau's observations on the fixed constellation in which the human attributes of solitude, love, and power often appear ["Love & Power," March]. While it seemed to me that his remarks might be true in reference to a particular historical situation, they were not true on the universal level to which he was projecting them.

. . . I believe that the quest for power like the quest for love is in a mitigated form an altogether normal one, and that it can be channeled in many constructive ways. Everyday reality provides us with sufficient satisfactions and outlets in this respect. One can satisfy one's needs for power by exercising mastery over nature, ideas, animals, and even, under the power circumstances, over other people—when they are weak and need our help; when they attack us and provoke our punitiveness; when they are subordinate to us in a hierarchical structure. In each of these situations, the quest for power should be tempered by a sense of justice, fair play, and compassion: it should be accompanied, that is, by the possibility of the emergence of a new situation in which those who are subordinate to us may aspire to become our equals.

What is true for power is true for love: if we can realistically satisfy our need for power by exercising it over those who are submissive to us, we can satisfy our need for love by channeling it to those who are our equals. Time and place bring us together with many people: in this there is no mysticism, as Professor Morgenthau seems to indicate. Where good intentions exist on either side, and where either side is willing to make a genuine effort, there is no reason why in time—and time is always the source and shaper of love—a relationship based on the enduring elements of respect, friendship, and love may not emerge.

If extreme solitude drives people into intense relationships, the intensity of the relationships which Professor Morgenthau describes must in turn generate an extreme and desperate kind of loneliness. A relationship in which two souls blend, as Aristophanes says, and merge into one may strike us as beautiful; but in the last analysis it cannot but be regarded as frightening and frustrating. On one level of their minds, people may surely desire it: on a deeper level, though, they cannot but withdraw from it in terror and fear. Who can really possibly seek to enter into a romantic or political situation in which his own identity and that of the other person's is threatened with extinction? Such violence may seem, like the outburst of a volcano; aesthetic from a distance, it assumes, however, quite a different coloration from nearby.

Professor Morgenthau mentions toward the end of his article the gods to whom man can make the perfect gift of his love and submission. Is Professor Morgenthau referring to that fact that the twilight of the gods in our age has produced the intense solitude and alienation from which modern man is suffering? For my part, I cannot help but feel that man's religious tendencies reflect his emotional ones—and that they cannot really provide outlets for frustrated social needs. Where man's relationship to man is harmonious, so, too, will be his relationship to the gods; where his relationships to man are full of disharmony and friction, he will create demonologies, theologies, and dogmas which will only exacerbate his earthly terror. . . .

Elie Flatto

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

What has Commentary done to Hans Morgenthau? Since joining your pages the old hard-boiled political realist has turned mushy-headed dreamer. Maybe it's not your fault, but, if you will permit me, I'd like to shake my fist at him (waving a few facts) to snap him out of his mystic trance.

Individual loneliness and existential metaphysics have little to do with the motility of burgeoning societies of hundreds of millions of people. Societies do not have a hunger for soul mates, and national power plays are not group erotic sublimations but are rather simple maneuvers for self-aggrandizement or defense.

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The Old Morgenthau, who saw the cocked atomic bomb stand-off as absurd, was eminently sane and sober. The new, love-sick Morgenthau, however, only compounds the absurdity. To solve problems you need not love so much as intelligence, and at the disarmament conference reason and persuasion should be called upon, not love-making. A libidinous diplomacy, in which a Tennessee Williams type of Machiavellianism would be as likely to operate as any, can get very sticky and is full of its own hazards. Besides, until they open up both ends of the street, there's no use even thinking about a walk on the wild side. In the meantime, let's hold with reason.

MURRAY FINK

San Fernando, California

MR. MORGENTHAU *writes:*

Mr. Fink seems to assume that a scholar who has made his reputation in the field of foreign policy has no business to write about anything else, and that someone who has emphasized the importance of power in human affairs ought to continue doing so to the exclusion of everything else. In truth, some people are capable of conceiving of more than one idea during their lifetime and of having more than one intellectual interest. I came to the study of international relations from political philosophy and I intend to return to it whenever the spirit moves me, which I hope will be often.

What Mr. Flatto says about the "normal" satisfactions of the desire for love and power is empirically correct. What I was trying to describe was not the "normal," that is, mitigated and socially adjusted relationship, but its pure type. If we want to know what the desire for power is like, it is more profitable to try to understand a Caesar or Napoleon than to watch the man next door. If we want to understand the nature of love, Romeo and Juliet can tell us more than the couple parked in that car. Hamlet, similarly, is a better guide to the understanding of moral action than what we have experienced ourselves.

Theology must indeed be accepted on its own terms as an autonomous field of human existence. But its organic connection with human existence stems from man's experience of his limits, of the contrast between what he is and what he can do, and what he desires, imagines, and is potentially capable of. The experience of that contrast is perennial, and it is a moot question whether it has really been accentuated or not rather been glossed over in our time. But certainly modern man's inability to believe in the literal message of religion and, more particularly, in the meaningful existence of another world has had a profound influence on his consciousness of himself. Confined to this world and to himself, he must come to terms with the experience of that contrast without the aid of supernatural forces.

Straightening the Record

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am grateful to Mr. Richard Crossman for his friendly references in your June issue to my book *The Balfour Declaration,* but I feel bound to draw attention to the fact that his description of his article as "a summary of the astonishing story" I have to tell may lead to the reader's attributing to me statements of fact and expressions of opinion for which I am not responsible. There is no clear distinction in the article between what actually appears in my book and Mr. Crossman's interpretations or amplifications of, or comments on, what he finds there.

I cannot ask for space to deal exhaustively with every point, but permit me to append some illustrations which will explain what I mean.

(1) "To add a few more hundreds to the 35,000 Jews who then (1914) formed a tiny minority among the two million Arabs in Palestine"—The figures given in my book (p. 81) are 35,000 Jews in the early 1880's and, in 1914, 85,000 Jews and 600,000 Arabs.

(2) There is nothing in my book to the effect that it was "with Weizmann's encouragement" that Herbert Samuel circulated his 1915 memorandum to the Cabinet.

(3) The final text of the Samuel memorandum was that circulated in March (not January) 1915, the date having some significance (pp. 109–111).

(4) It is not the case that, when invited to meet Balfour in January 1906, Weizmann agreed "because Balfour was then Prime Minister." Balfour had resigned toward the end of 1905 and was now leader of the Opposition (p. 148).

(5) From Mr. Crossman's extensive references to Winston Churchill it might be inferred that he is represented in my book as an important figure in the events leading to the Declaration. I do not, in fact, mention him at all in connection with these events, in which, to the best of my knowledge, he had no significant part.

Other examples, of a somewhat different type, are as follows:

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(6) "Mr. Stein starts by reminding us what an insignificant little thing Zionism was in 1914."

(7) "The [Zionist] leaders can hardly be blamed for . . . giving their full support to the Germans."

(8) "This buttoned-up, assimilated, ambitious Anglo-Jew [Lord Samuel]."

(9) "As soon as the signatures had been set to it [the Sykes-Picot Agreement], the British Foreign Office began to seek methods of invalidating it."

(10) "It was decided, for no clear reason, to issue the Declaration in the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild."

(11) "Mr. Stein's investigations have conclusively shown that, if the Declaration had not been passed on October 30, the British Cabinet would never have adopted it, since the reasons of state and the propaganda advantages which the British expected to derive from it had all been invalidated within three weeks of its proclamation."

(12) "The British Foreign Office never once warned the Government that the Arabs might prove an obstacle to its [the Declaration's] achievement."

In all these cases I may be taken to have said something which I have not said and should not have felt justified in saying.

LEONARD J. STEIN

London, England

More on Sacco-Vanzetti

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thoroughly enjoyed . . . James Grossman's article . . . ["The Sacco-Vanzetti Case Reconsidered," January]. I have been making a study of the case and his article has helped considerably. It was my first experience with the magazine and because of it, I will continue reading COMMENTARY.

(MISS) EVAN J. EVANSON

Brooklyn, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your May 1962 issue ["Letters from Readers"] publishes a letter about the Sacco-Vanzetti case from Mr. R. Hugh Uhlmann which singles out a piece of evidence supposed to be "very indicative of Sacco's guilt."

The letter repeats an old argument concerning the so-called "No. 3" bullet put in evidence by the Commonwealth as the mortal bullet which killed one of the victims. The bullet was of Winchester make. The letter states that this bullet was "of a type so obsolete that neither the defense expert nor the state expert could find a matching bullet to fire through Sacco's gun for comparison purposes" and that "several of the obsolete Winchester type which nobody could find" were among the bullets in Sacco's pockets. The letter further states that this was "one point not in dispute."

This recital of supposed facts and the inference which Mr. Uhlmann draws from them are both inaccurate.

In the first place Mr. Uhlmann's letter assumes that his "point" was made at some stage of the Sacco-Vanzetti case and was not disputed. This is not so. From the beginning to the end of the Sacco-Vanzetti case this "point" was not raised by anyone. Mr. Katzmann, the very astute prosecutor who seems to have overlooked nothing in the preparation and trial of the case, never mentioned the claim. Judge Thayer, in his several opinions setting out his selection of evidence supposed to prove the guilt of the defendants (even including nonexistent testimony), did not include the point. During the many days of our hearings before the Governor's Advisory Committee (sometimes referred to as "The Lowell Committee," after its Chairman, Abbott Lawrence Lowell), no member of this body suggested in any way that such a claim would be made. The Assistant District Attorney made no such argument before the Committee.

The idea that the "point" made by Mr. Uhlmann was proof of the guilt of Sacco and Vanzetti made its first appearance in the report of The Lowell Committee. This was also the first appearance of the word "obsolete" to describe the No. 3 bullet. It was then too late to bring out the actual facts and to show that the claim was without merit.

The actual facts were as follows:

(1) Winchester bullets of the type of No. 3 were far from "obsolete" during the years immediately preceding the date of the South Braintree murders (April 15, 1920) when the bandits must have bought their ammunition. The Winchester Company had stopped making this type in August 1917, but all of its new ammunition had gone for war purposes during this period. The only Winchester bullets which could have been purchased from dealers at this time, certainly prior to 1919, were of the older type.

(2) Sacco bought his bullets on Hanover Street, Boston, in 1917. The dealer did not have in stock any new boxes of cartridges, but assembled a lot of loose bullets of mixed

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make. Sacco had the gun as night watchman in his employer's shoe factory where he worked as an edge-trimmer by day. Any private purchaser of cartridges about this time, including the bandits, would also have had to take whatever remained of a dealer's stock during that period.

(3) Even if it were true that the older Winchester type could not be found in June 1921 (when the trial was held), this would not indicate that it was a scarce item in the years prior to April 15, 1920.

However, it is not true that the No. 3 type could not be found in 1921. Even as late as 1923, defense expert Hamilton obtained and used six cartridges of this type.

At the trial, no one testified that the No. 3 type was "obsolete." Apparently the misconception indicated by the Lowell report arose from a foggy recollection of what defense expert Burns stated at the trial. Mr. Burns produced and used six cartridges of "U.S." make, instead of Winchester. On cross-examination by Mr. Katzmann, Mr. Burns stated that he had tried to get Winchesters of this type "between here [Dedham] and Lowell." He did not say what stores he tried on this highway or how many. He did not even try the Winchester factory. He also pleaded lack of time. Mr. Katzmann cross-examined Mr. Burns to show how little real effort the expert had made to get the Winchester type. To the prosecutor at the time of the trial, Mr. Burns's production of U.S. cartridges instead of the Winchester type in evidence merely indicated lack of diligence on the part of Mr. Burns. The Lowell Committee members apparently forgot the actual testimony as well as Mr. Katzmann's view of the incident. As in other instances, they found new proof of guilt by substituting their unreliable memories for the record.

I have dealt at some length with the "point" of Mr. Uhlmann's letter because it is typical of the kind of "proof" now being used to establish the guilt of Sacco and Vanzetti. It is noteworthy that most of these efforts now tend to pass over the evidence which led to their execution. Identification, consciousness of guilt, and expert ballistic opinions relied upon to support the final judgment are now rarely treated seriously. Resort is now had to statements and happenings never subjected to the safeguards of the judicial process.

Of course, some of this material may, nevertheless, be significant, but, like the "obsolete" bullet, the most critical scrutiny by students of the case is necessary before acceptance of the alleged "facts" or the inferences to be drawn from them.

The very fact, however, that "proof" outside of that in the record is now needed, suggests that there was much that was wrong about the proceedings which ended in the execution. Indeed there was. To me, the proceedings against these men constitute one of the most bizarre and unbelievable prosecutions in modern history. I hope to tell why this is so in a book that will supplement my recently reissued *The Untried Case*.

HERBERT B. EHRMANN

Boston, Massachusetts

Cities and Planners

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Herbert J. Gans, in his essay-review of Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* ["City Planning and Urban Realities," February], manages a remarkable appraisal. After asserting that her argument's "three fundamental assumptions" are either wrong, unsupported by fact, or otherwise fallacious . . . and then carefully discrediting much of the book, the reviewer is able to say that the work is a "path-breaking achievement" and to remark wistfully that he wishes the author was not wrong so often. Has logic gone out of style, or has Gans missed the point?

The reviewer's dilemma is indicated by his one area of agreement with Mrs. Jacobs: that "orthodox city planning" does not meet "the needs of people." Hence her observations on people in the city and planning merit consideration. Yet earlier Gans says: "The truth is that the new forms of residential building . . . are not products of orthodox theory but expressions of the middle-class culture. . . ." He further asserts that middle-class mores, housing demands, and planners, as well as private enterprise itself, are insuperable obstacles to the creation of good environments. . . . Then is the only solution reform of middle-class culture? If so, this might explain how Gans viewed a thorough critique of that culture as an empirical commentary on urban society without seeing the book's message: there is no possibility of "reform" without radical reconstruction of middle-class society. . . .

Mrs. Jacobs's first sentence declares her book to be "an attack on current city planning and rebuilding," and throughout its main concern is with residential neighborhoods. But a few pages further on she says the book is an attempt to explain "the underlying order of cities" and to rip off the "dishonest

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mask of pretended order." We enter the presence of no less than a full-dress critique of urban society. . . . Indeed [according to Mrs. Jacobs], it is impossible to govern the metropolis, and she suggests breaking up municipal government into self-governing districts of 200,000 people. . . .

Yet the "crisis" of the big city projected by romantic rebels for whom freedom can mean only local, individual release from a coercive society leads to the call for heroic disengagement from participation in ameliorating conditions through the existing institutional order. . . . Mrs. Jacobs, who at least . . . attempts to fit reality into her categories, bravely admits that perhaps it is better to stop rebuilding the city. Or at least until someone, like herself, for example, is put in charge of the job to see that it is done "right". . . .

The neo-orthodoxy of the savior of the city makes a mockery of her pious concern for human beings. . . . To state, as she does, that the trouble with slum-dwellers is that they tend to move out of tenements as fast as they can, or "dream of moving" rather than remain one or two generations while the slums go away of themselves, is worse than ridiculous. . . .

Gans's sociological imagination—that conjures up "middle-class" culture, tastes, and status symbols—is one of his great burdens in understanding how the romantic strivings of Mrs. Jacobs and her ideological compatriots (like Whyte or Mills or Mumford) manage to abstract society from history and from the requirements of empirical analysis. . . . Gans may well tell us that "good ideas" can and ought to be adapted for use in planning, but as any practicing "planner" will tell him, the trick is how to make the idea work in the real life of a democratic society. Gans leaves us as mired in despair as does Mrs. Jacobs that the trick can be performed without abolishing poverty and discrimination and reforming middle-class taste; in the end he is as irrelevant to the discussion of urban problems as the author he criticizes. The romantic heroism of disenchanted intellectuals of the Left and the millenarians of the Right are too much with us these days to tolerate an uncritical appraisal.

. . . If Mrs. Jacobs's book breaks a path, it is a path leading backward to the past that never existed, an escape from responsible confrontation of the real problems of the big city.

JEROME ZUKOSKY

New York City

MR. GANS *writes:*

My review of Mrs. Jacobs's book may have been ambivalent, but I do not believe it was illogical. I thought that she took a fresh look at both cities and city planning, but that unfortunately, the assumptions behind her look were often wrong. Even so, the book has value as a pathbreaker, that is, in stimulating discussion of and research into her ideas, and those she attacks.

Mr. Zukosky is right in describing Mrs. Jacobs as a romantic, for the city neighborhoods she defends are really villages in the city. In that sense, she is as anti-urban as the planners, except that she wants her villages surrounded by asphalt; they, by trees. Most Americans, meanwhile, want a bit of both, and find it in the suburbs. My research in suburban communities convinces me that the physical environment which people of middle-class culture have created out there —with the aid of private enterprise and planning—is by and large a positive one.

If I am irrelevant to the discussion of urban problems, as Mr. Zukosky charges, it is only because I think the major problems are neither urban nor suburban, and have nothing to do with building types and site plans. Most of the ills ascribed to the city today are the results of poverty, underemployment, and discrimination. Their solution does not require a radical reform of middle-class culture, but of occupational opportunities and income distribution. The remaining problems of the city are largely technological, and they are relatively easy to solve—once the non-white slum dweller has been allowed access to middle-class opportunities. Increases in productivity and shifts in economic or political power are not, however, achieved either by romantic heroism, by scapegoating the hapless planners, or by a revival of village life in the city. But neither can they be achieved by labeling problems as urban.

Cuba and Its Impact

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on publishing Dennis H. Wrong's excellent post mortem, "The American Left and Cuba" [February]. This concise, meticulously fair article says all that would seem necessary to say in describing the impact of Cuba's Communist dictatorship on the various tendencies of America's new Left. . . .

But one can ask why anti-Communists professing humanistic values and even devotion to libertarian precepts . . . support,

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even though critically, a naked Communist dictatorship? . . . What is the fascination some pacifists have for the regimes of total violence? What is the fascination some libertarians have for the regime of total direction? Does this seemingly odd critical accommodation between complete opposites throw any light on the psychodynamics that bring the proponents of absolute truth into an uneasy embrace with the men of the total lie? . . .

MILTON ZATINSKY

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was disappointed in Dennis H. Wrong's article. . . . After all, everybody, by now, knows all about the old anti-capitalist Left as well as the newer anti-Stalinist Left. But how about the "New" Left?

Wrong's first mistake is his assumption that the New Left is an English phenomenon. While it is true that the younger English radicals have popularized the phrase in their magazine, the *New Left Review*, the expression, it seems to me, goes back to an exchange conducted between C. Wright Mills and Irving Howe in the Summer 1959 *Dissent* over Howe's review of *The Causes of World War III*. . . . In saying this, I am not trying to claim the New Left as an American innovation; actually it is world-wide. The Japanese Zengakuren, the South Korean students, the Cuban 26th of July Movement, as well as the young English and American radicals, are all a part of the same phenomenon. In fact, I would even go as far as to claim that the young Polish and Hungarian workers, students, and intellectuals are also a part of it, if I did not realize that I would upset the State Department by saying so. . . .

Wrong has an amazing immunity to that which is new in the New Left; after a momentary brush with the new, he relapses into a stereotyped criticism of the old. . . . What is new about the New Left? Its nationalism; its concern for concrete incident as opposed to abstract theory; its flair for political activism; and its serious feeling that something must be done. The young American radicals do not so much support Castro as repudiate American action against him. . . .

JAMES GATSBY

Erie, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading "The American Left and Cuba" by Dennis H. Wrong, I was struck by the recurring theme of Cuba's smallness. Mr. Wrong writes: "Cuba is, after all, a small country, necessarily confined to a minor role in world politics and scarcely likely to be the scene of a social transformation that is vitally relevant to the experience of older and larger nations". . . . The insignificance of Cuba's Maximum Leader in the eyes of Mr. Wrong is evident when he says that "the United States could destroy him in a few days if it so wished."

All this poses the question of what measures the greatness of a nation. Mr. Wrong leads us to believe that size is the determining factor. . . . One cannot help remembering the obvious fact that many earth-shaking ideas and events took place in small nations.

ALFONSO L. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Child-Rearing in the Kibbutz

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to tell you that the recent issues of COMMENTARY have been superb. Bruno Bettelheim's article in the February issue, "Does Communal Education Work?—The Case of the Kibbutz," is required reading for all my students in *The Family* course.

ERICH ROSENTHAL

Queens College
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is regrettable that Professor Bettelheim allowed himself to become so emotional in his evaluation which is based exclusively on reports of others and not at all on his personal observations.

I talked with many in Israel about child-rearing and did not find unanimity even among kibbutzniks. It is true that within the kibbutz there is nowhere the extent of maladjustment and delinquency we know in our country. And yet I found kibbutzim using the services of social caseworkers. . . . One social worker told me that the children in the kibbutzim are affected by the problems between parents, as we could expect. This is particularly true where conflict arises over leaving the kibbutz. One parent wishes to remain and the other prefers to leave, and the children reflect this conflict in spite of the fact that they live among and with their peers.

It is very interesting to note that parents are becoming dissatisfied with communal houses and are voting increasingly to have their children with them at night. . . .

The conclusions are not as simple as those

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posed by Professor Bettelheim. Many adults and children leave the kibbutzim and many return. The lure of the city operates there, as here, although not as powerfully. What will this mean ten years hence? I agree with Professor Bettelheim that we might well emulate the seriousness with which the kibbutzim concern themselves in regard to the education of their children.

JEANNETTE G. GLASSBERG
Arlington, Virginia

Academia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Goodman's essay, "The Community of Scholars" [March], will strike a sympathetic note with those students (and faculty) whose sense of adventure has not yet been smothered by safe attitudes.

In this connection I would like to point out the paradoxical role of the trustees in relation to the "community of scholars." Ultimate responsibility for university policy rests with these men who are chosen, not because of any outstanding abilities as educators, but rather because of their ability to raise money either through personal fortunes and/or corporate or government nexuses. Colleges find themselves in the absurd situation where ultimate authority rests with a group whose interests exactly coincide with the status quo (and who, incidentally, often have lifetime tenure). It is not surprising, then, that colleges do not stand for something; that the community of scholars does not "confront reality" in the role of "loyal opposition." Colleges more and more resemble the efficient "business-like" organizations in which their group leaders, managers, and board of directors can flourish—while the student is constantly pressured to produce "profitable" results.

STEPHEN M. EDELGLASS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . On entering one of the East's eminent universities, I was thrilled to think that *I* would now know the adult elite—my teachers. For four years I searched for a teacher who would talk with even a group of students without inching his way backward out of the door. For four years I searched for a purgatory where I wouldn't have to "grow up."

College left me frustrated . . . two years later, I still feel stunted and cheated. . . .

ELLEN WOLF
Brighton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In reading Paul Goodman's provocative, yet disheartening, article on "The Community of Scholars," I was struck by the way in which it seemed to echo an essay published in 1922, "Oxford As I See It," by Stephen Leacock. . . .

There is, however, one basic difference between Mr. Goodman's essay and Leacock's. Leacock seems to have found his educational Utopia—in Oxford University. . . . According to Leacock, Oxford's greatness can be attributed primarily to its tutorial system. "It is from him [the tutor] or rather with him, that the students learn all that they know; one and all are agreed on that. . . . Yet it is a little odd to know just how he does it. 'We go over to his rooms,' said one student, 'and he just lights a pipe and talks to us! We sit round with him' said another, 'and he simply smokes and goes over our exercises with us!'"

It is just this lack of contact between students and faculty which Mr. Goodman points to as a major weakness in our educational system. . . .

(MISS) LAUREL H. KAGAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My compliments to Paul Goodman on his perceptive article "The Community of Scholars." Despite some amiable ramblings he does successfully underscore the significance of establishing connections between students and professors, and the college and community.

Establishing connections between the school and the community is education in its fullest and richest sense. I, therefore, fail to see why he disparages student concern (expressed in group actions as well as in college newspapers) with national and world news rather than with "home news." Student concern with free speech, anti-bomb test demonstrations, freedom riders, and other national and international issues are precisely the kinds of connections that reveal increased understanding of the problems of a democratic society. Students are to be applauded when they do understand this connection, for they are then beginning to educate themselves. They are, so to speak, not "growing up absurd" and probably do not need connections with the type of professor Mr. Goodman describes in his article.

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TWITCHES AND EMBARRASSMENTS

PIGEON FEATHERS AND OTHER STORIES. By JOHN UPDIKE. *Knopf. 279 pp. $4.00.*

Reviewed by ALFRED CHESTER

UPDIKE WRITES VERY well; he can handle long and complicated syntax with nonchalant grace; he is always johnny-on-the-spot with the sharp image, the sensual observation, the neat, immediate response; he can appear to say one thing, which he isn't saying at all, in order to conceal from you the fact that he is saying something quite else; he can, in short, create a surface that gives you some illusion of depth. Nearly all his powers are evident in the following quotation, the first sentence of a story called "The Persistence of Desire":

> Pennypacker's office still smelled of linoleum, a clean, sad scent that seemed to lift from the checkerboard floor in squares of alternating intensity; this pattern had given Clyde as a boy a funny nervous feeling of intersection, and now he stood crisscrossed by a double sense of himself, his present identity extending down from Massachusetts to meet his disconsolate youth in Pennsylvania, projected upward from a distance of years.

If the sentence isn't ingenious, it is certainly crafty. Updike is giving you the impression that something important and of uncanny depth is happening in the hero—all that alternating-intersection-crisscross-double-identity stuff. He is giving you the impression that something vital is being said. Let me hasten to assure you that nothing is being said. The sentence is just one of those gigantic and meaningless elaborations that so many of us poor mortals are prone to when we're telling a story whose true point we want to conceal. The point in this case being, of course, that the *New Yorker* finds it virtuous for its writers to railroad its readers into a dozen pieces of plot information in the very first line of a story.

Having now, like everyone else, applauded Updike's technique—or, rather, his craft—I will applaud nothing else in this collection scraped out of the *New Yorker*. There's no reason to describe any of these stories for you; you've read them all before, by a hundred different writers. Childhood disappointments, adolescent nostalgias, bittersweet marital and family scenes, mildly comic love affairs, poignant reminiscences—all peopled by characters who respond to each other with the mechanical inevitability of a geiger counter to a uranium heap.

Clickety-clack, and then it's over, both clods unchanged, neither they, nor their author, aware of the implicit horrors. They are all so polite, so profoundly untroubled. Lust, when it rises, is always chopped down to size by Updike, chopped into something rather frivolous and charming, terribly undangerous. Rage is crushed into pique. Bitterness and violence—but who is ever bitter or violent in this world stuffed with pigeon feathers? Who is ever ribald? Who is ever outrageous? Who ever screams with laughter, ecstasy, or despair?

It would be possible to flatter Updike by systematizing the negatives of his characters into a satiric view of contemporary man. But his view is not satiric and cannot be considered such because, first of all, the prevailing mood is nostalgia, and secondly, and more important, there is no outside point of reference, there is no proffered contrast or alternative to his world. Updike shows us nothing to which we can refer his scrubbed and hygienic characters—not to any real emotions, not to any idea of destiny, not to God, torment, laughter, nature, eternity, anything large: anything large, that is, except the word-rate of the world's most generous literary oasis, the *New Yorker*. Let us sit down for a moment at this expensive watering place of Updike's art where, with weary avaricious sighs, so many other

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writers have at last disburdened themselves of their talents.

The *New Yorker's* concept of the human being is essentially psychoanalytical. And psychoanalysis is one of the vital agents in our contemporary American conspiracy to keep ourselves feeling small, to minimize our idea of man to nothing, to a thing easily expendable in the universe. (I won't try to speculate about why we should *want* to feel small, except to say that it seems appropriate to creatures passively attendant upon their cremation. Those who saw the film version of *On The Beach* will remember that they could feel no sense of loss, no grief, at the annihilation of a race of Ava Gardners and Gregory Pecks.) In reducing ourselves to absurdity, we have learned from psychoanalysis to believe in our nervous reactions. We have learned from it to treat our petty twitches, our guilts and impotences, our embarrassments and anxieties, as though they were emotions. We spend long evenings with friends talking about nothing else, if we talk at all, if we do other than gape. Our artists too have entered the conspiracy and, that no one might suspect them of being big, or bigger than others, and therefore a measuring stick of human potential, they have agreed to limit their productions to personal, very personal—or, at worst, apparently personal—statements. They will, in effect, gossip rather than inspire. They will say nothing that might make us wonder whether they are perhaps capable of divesting themselves of their egos, of becoming creators rather than the merely created. If we now find artists camping in those glamorous public heavens hitherto reserved for movie stars, it isn't because we have come to rank them among the gods, but because we want their subjectivities always in evidence, we want to see them being small. What would happen to our *Weltanschauung* and our atom bomb, for example, if there were great emotions and great voices issuing from apparently no one, daring absolutes, postulating souls?

T. S. Eliot says somewhere that Freud has affected the quality of our dreams. This is a courageous statement and, so far as I know, no one else has had the nerve to suggest that dreams may have been different before Freud created them, and us, in his image. Maybe dreams *did* broadcast the future when no one but oracles and fortune-tellers were poking around in them. We *are* what those who came before us *imagined* themselves to be. We suffer the sins of our fathers, and consequently our vision of feeling is today a vision of tiny neurotic discomforts, inescapably linked to the infantile. It is truly a ridiculous and unworthy vision, and the only possible way we can make it untrue is by not believing in it anymore, by imagining ourselves to be something else, something nobler. *We* won't be, of course; *we* can only imagine we'll be. But our children *will* be, if we can hold out for another generation.

But the *New Yorker* and John Updike are both deeply immersed in the image of man as trivia; they consider no alternatives. Reading Updike, like reading the *New Yorker,* gives one the impression that the pages would turn to ash at the mere suggestion that life was other than a negative-positive mosquito buzzing in the ear of a total vacuum. "I was twenty-four," writes Updike in one story, "and the religious revival within myself was at its height." And out the window go several thousand years of spiritual experience. How cheap, how vulgar, how pathetically frightened a writer he is in these stories, too terrified to do other than scratch the same old graffitti on the same old walls. And yet in his brief career—he is only thirty—he hasn't always been frightened. In his second novel, *Rabbit, Run,* he seemed, like his hero, about to escape from Nothing, from the devouring greed of the human being as a nervous reaction. *Rabbit, Run* was not a good book. Updike has no sense of invention, no imagination—he seems incapable of making anything up to save his life—no ability to create living people, conflict, or drama. But in *Rabbit, Run,* he attempted a big image of man. He didn't succeed; his hero seems more like a coward than a Christ in his fugues. But it doesn't matter. Updike tried. He was on the side of life.

But he almost never is in his stories. In his first collection, *The Same Door,* also flushed out of the *New Yorker,* there was, despite everything, a certain innocence. There was something sweet and touchingly simple-minded about this very young writer who had read too many *New Yorkers* and

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come to believe that the art of the short story consisted of a highly detailed scene or a bit of nostaligia, bright and polished as a new automobile (to borrow Updike's favorite prop), with a cheap ironic comment clapped like a license plate on the rear. But one sensed a struggle in the writing. His shallow characters were occasionally threatened: by a Negro con man, by a schoolgirl passing a love letter, by a fight next door. Emotion, real emotion, seemed about to enter, and with it, humanity, tragedy, passion. But the threats always turned out to be unreal, more unreal than Updike's Greenwich Village whose main streets, he says, are "thronged with gangsters and hermaphrodites." The rumored emotions finally dissipated themselves in raised eyebrows, nervous snickers, reassuring smiles. Smallness always triumphs.

In *Pigeon Feathers,* Updike has completely succumbed. Let me quote to you the last lines of five stories:

> . . . the momentous moral of this story being, An expected gift is not worth giving.

> Thus the world, like a bitter coquette, spurns our attempts to give ourselves to her wholly.

> What is the past, after all, but a vast sheet of darkness in which a few moments, pricked apparently at random, shine?

> For I thought that this story, fully told, would become without my willing it a happy story, a story full of joy; had my powers been greater, we would know. As it is, you, like me, must take it on faith.

> We in America need ceremonies, is I suppose, sailor, the point of what I have written.

This last line, which also closes the book, is a reference to a sailor who had asked Updike the point of writing.

What sad flourishes these lines all are! Arriving, after 15 or 20 pages, at his arbitrary destination, Updike grows suddenly self-conscious about the pettiness and emptiness of his story and puffs out a pompous irrelevant meaning. But up to this point, he doesn't give a damn about making these stories into anything worth reading—and they aren't worth reading except insofar as you happen to be interested in watching the craft with which they were made in the first place. He exploits his senses and his syntax in order to weave a pretty bridge in a void; it begins nowhere, it goes nowhere, it spans nothing, and no one ever walks on it.

It would be simple to write: he has nothing to say. But this would be avoiding the issue. Despite the currency of the phrase, we really don't want writers to *say* anything because, as soon as they do, we get bored. What we do want is for them to *feel* something, and to make *us* feel something, because we so rarely do and because it may, in part, restore to us some sense of value and dignity in ourselves. Teach us, O Artists, not to settle for guilts and anxieties, for twitches and embarrassments! Teach us, O Artists, to feel again! Because emotions are the only thing that artists have to say—and emotion will make us gigantic and tragic. (Ideas never can; they can only follow, like dogs. Ideas, however pertinent, however great, tend to remove us from reality; feelings always bring us back again. Ideas explain experience; feelings *are* experience.)

And, lest I do Updike an injustice, I must mention that one story, the title story, labored and overwritten though it is, approaches feeling. It concerns a boy's confrontation with faith and doubt. The penultimate sentences, when the kid examines with wonder the pigeons he has just shot in the barn, are moving:

> The feathers were more wonderful than dog's hair, for each filament was shaped within the shape of the feather, and the feathers in turn were trimmed to fit a pattern that flowed without error across the bird's body. He lost himself in the geometrical tides as the feathers now broadened and stiffened to make an edge for flight, now softened and constricted to cup warmth around the mute flesh. And across the surface of the infinitely adjusted yet somehow effortless mechanics of the feathers played idle designs of color, no two alike, designs executed, it seemed, in a controlled rapture, with a joy that hung level in the air above and behind him.

But where do these lines end up—only in that junkyard of rusty ironies that clanks around in the minds of *New Yorker* readers and reduces everyone to the size of a sacri-

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ficial victim: "... the God who had lavished such craft upon these worthless birds would not destroy His whole Creation by refusing to let David live forever."

To which I can only add, sailor, that a God who has allowed a writer to lavish such craft upon these worthless tales is capable of anything.

A BREED APART

MY LIFE IN COURT. By LOUIS NIZER. *Doubleday. 524 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID T. BAZELON

NO MATTER HOW much the nine out of ten lawyers who never go to court may deny it, and no matter what legal entrancements they may find to occupy themselves meanwhile, the pure, true, and transcendent legal event is a trial. And the work of the sorrowful 90 per cent consists entirely of imagining what would happen *if* the contract, the letter, the prospectus, or other piece of paper ended up in court. Trial lawyers, the really good ones, are a breed apart. They are like intellectual matadors or fifty-mission war aces. Whole firms are built around a single one, because the mystique of a trial-winner is a great lodestone for clients who are money-winners. The money in legal practice, however, does not come directly from trying cases—and the best lawyers are always those who keep their clients out of court. But every once in a long while . . . the gauntlet is offered and cannot be refused. Then you run for Simon Rifkind or Bruce Bromley, Milton Pollack or Louis Nizer, or somebody who carried a briefcase for someone who was trained by Max Steuer. That is, if you really want to win, and can afford to pay the price. Trials are frightfully expensive, because there are thousands of man-hours of highly trained work behind the blue-serge baritone who finally initiates what is still one of the great secular mysteries of our way of life with the portentous, "May it *please* Your Honor. . . ."

No one ever told me that Louis Nizer was another Max Steuer, but everybody knows he's very good—one of the better ones around today. His book tends to prove this point; and has much besides to recommend it to the general reader. Properly read, it is an occasion for some real understanding of the trial man. Haphazardly or naively read, it is interesting, instructive, and even exciting. I don't pretend to understand why it has become a best seller—except that it is good, which wouldn't alone accomplish that; and was also superbly launched, which might. I do see very well why something from it has already been scheduled for a Broadway production this fall: television has revived our interest in law, and rightly so: great trials can sum up a generation, being both political and artistic events. A trial is the basic prototype of intellectual drama—fuller and richer than the dialogue: less rational and Platonic, more emotional and human.

My Life in Court is not "one of the great legal autobiographies of our time," as suggested by Max Lerner. It is hardly an autobiography at all, legal or otherwise. It mostly consists of a dramatic retelling of about eight or nine of Louis Nizer's legal victories, but: (1) no defeats; (2) no story of a career; (3) very little that is personal—hardly anything more than how he managed to get to sleep before the summation in such-and-so; and (4) it is basically the trial man putting himself on trial for the benefit of the public, all roles choreographed by the same prime-mover. The big victories heralded and dramatized are Quentin Reynolds's libel case against Westbrook Pegler; several divorce actions including one of Billy Rose, a foot fetishist, and a John Jacob Astor; a song plagiarism involving the classic "Rum and Coca-Cola"; another libel action brought by the refugee anti-Nazi, Professor Friedrich Foerster, against Victor F. Ridder, publisher of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung und Herold;* a couple of choice negligence cases; and the complicated struggle for control of Loew's, Inc. The long section on divorce is a bit of an anomaly in the book, since it is a rather broad (and surprisingly good) discussion of law technique in matrimonial matters—rather than the dramatic narrative of courtroom action. The plagiarism case is effective for showing how much *hard work* can be consumed in a more or less ridiculous litigation. The negligence cases are quite good, but are included, I imagine, because of the author's deep pride in the almost impossible triumphs—especially the first one, in which an unheard-of victory was

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gained against an obstetrician (you can hardly ever get a doctor for careless practice, because you need another doctor to testify as an expert and they just won't). The weakest section is that of the libel case concerning Nazi sympathies (but most noble and important to the author, who years ago wrote a defense of the Morgenthau thesis on Germany).

THE NARRATIVE OF the Pegler trial is far and away the best of the collection. It convinced me that this trial could stand nomination for one of the most significant of our generation—because, as in the Hiss case, the issue was deeply imbedded in the personalities of two combatants, and was tragically impossible of resolution by a legal judgment. Nizer sees it as a hard-fought vindication of one of his kind of people against a popularly detested troublemaker; and also, naturally, as his achievement of the largest libel award of punitive damages in American legal history. But the true fascination of the Reynolds-Pegler conflict lies in the deeper nuance and profounder inevitability of the clash of journalistic-literary values. Reynolds was one of the most popular, well-liked, big-time journalists in the country, almost a nice Ed Murrow; as Nizer says, he had even had a private dinner with Churchill. (There is an awful lot of name-dropping in this book.) But no intimation of anything more than a popular-magazine talent, with a "Me, the People" posture. (For example, out of topical foolishness he spoke in favor of the Russian Army purges.) Pegler, on the other hand, can hardly be characterized without libeling him—so I won't try. But he is probably one of the most talented stylists appearing regularly in American newspapers. Both started out together years ago in the Heywood Broun coterie. (One of the charges of libel was that Pegler said Reynolds bathed in the nude at Broun's Connecticut country place, and proposed marriage to the widow on the way to the burial—also that he was pro-Communist, a coward as a war correspondent, etc.) Pegler's hatred of Reynolds is almost *too* understandable, because Reynolds had the kind of success that, in a better world, Pegler (for talent) deserved even more; but that, in this world, he (out of abrasive feeling) had disqualified himself from achieving. Pegler was too talented, even too "serious" in a distorted way: these right-wing hot-heads are nothing if not emotionally interesting.

Although Nizer never admits it, in an equivocal way the case from his end was almost too easy. Pegler was the classic sitting-duck for cross-examination: he could get a job, anytime Hearst readers tire of him, as a demonstrator in law schools. Nizer succeeded so well as a cross-examiner that several times Pegler nearly struck him when he approached the witness stand too closely. This goading technique is indicated by the following:

> I found that one of the easiest ways to reveal Pegler's extremism and irresponsibility was to question him about men who were genuinely admired and draw his denunciation of them.
> Q. Did you rely on General MacArthur with respect to . . .
> A. No, I don't think he knew head to finger side what he was talking about . . .

The baiting was required in order to bring out the malice which supplies the legal basis for an award of punitive damages—the libel itself was fairly clear from the beginning, and there were no actual damages. Sitting-duck though Pegler was, Nizer showed great cleverness in taking fullest advantage of him. For example, the legal answer to Reynolds's complaint initiating the lawsuit repeated and embellished the original libel (apparently it was touched up by Pegler himself, who published part of it in his column), but Nizer shrewdly let it stand instead of moving to have it changed, because it confirmed the malice and also implicated the Hearst companies more directly: they were finally charged with $75,000 of the $175,000 award by the jury.

One might imagine oneself, in the role of cross-examiner, letting up after awhile on someone like Pegler. But not the real trial men. They are a breed apart. The essential difference was once characterized for me by a man who was as good a craftsman as any I have ever met. I was assisting him in a frantic injunction action and, in a reflective mood, he insisted on formulating the reason he was not a top-flight trial man. "I have the brains, the legal sense, and the imagination," he admitted, staring at the ceiling. "But I just don't have the jugular instinct—

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and you can't learn that. You have to be *born* a tiger and *then* go to law school." Not just any old tiger, you understand, but one with supple language, an actor's projective sense of himself, a quick instinctive intelligence, a degrading intuitive sense of popular values (certainly for the jury actor), an unerring feel for an opponent's psychological weakness—all built around and serving a tiger's passion to win.

THE LAST CASE in the book concerns the struggle for control of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (Loew's, Inc.), which Nizer masterminded on behalf of the management. He tells the story well—but I happen to know that it is a much better story than the one he tells, because I was a line lieutenant in the army under his command. The fight for Loew's was a massive donnybrook—not comparable at all to a single courtroom action, no matter how intensely engaged in. (The over-all maneuvering did include several lawsuits, as well as hearings before the SEC: Nizer says there were twenty-six hours of oral argument on motions, etc., along with eighteen sizeable legal briefs.) What happened was that the great Louis B. Mayer made an attempt to regain control of the company he helped to make great, using a young protégé and a free-wheeling Canadian millionaire to front for him. They nearly succeeded by undermining and then taking over control of the board of directors. The management strategy was to call a special stockholders' meeting in order to retake control of the board; the opposition tried everything in the book (*and* one or two of the supplements) to prevent this meeting—they never seriously undertook a counter-solicitation of proxies, much to our surprise. There was no letup from July until the meeting was finally held some time in the middle of October. Backstage at the Loew's State Theater, where the meeting was appropriately held, the tired tiger retained his fierce devotion until the last proxy was counted, the last vote-counter's affidavit signed. Then it was all over, the "real movie people" had won, Napoleon had not reached Paris, and we all gathered at Dinty Moore's for a victory celebration. One of the kind of things Louis Nizer doesn't mention about the practice of the law is that some of us ended up needlessly insulting each other.

HERZL'S UTOPIA

ALTNEULAND. By THEODOR HERZL. Translated from the original German by LOTTA LEVENSOHN. Preface by EMANUEL NEUMANN. *Bloch Publishing Company and Herzl Press. 296 pp. $3.75*

Reviewed by LEONARD GREENBAUM

THEODOR HERZL'S UTOPIAN novel, *Altneuland*, first addressed to the Diaspora in 1902, was recently reissued in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Herzl's birth. As literature it has little virtue, but as a historical document it reveals the romantic utopianism that lay behind Herzl's efforts to create a Jewish homeland.

Like many utopias, *Altneuland* stands in the direct line of descent from the millennium of the Old Testament—the prophetic promise of a world where waters burst forth in the wilderness and the wolf and the lamb feed together. *Altneuland* renews these visions in a peculiarly 19th-century perspective blending socialism, mechanism, and Western European high culture. The state of Altneuland itself belongs to that imaginary world organization of nations—the utopias of the 19th century—descriptions of which may be found in such novels as Theodor Hertzka's *Freiland* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

The frame of Herzl's utopian novel is provided by a visit to a Jewish state twenty years in the future—that is, in 1923—by two misanthropes, one a German nobleman, the other an "educated, desperate" young Jew, a Matthew Arnold type who stands on Jaffa beach sighing, "Ah, but faith was dead now, youth was dead. . . ." In their disgust with society they have spent twenty years on an isolated Pacific island. When the two travelers had visited Palestine on their journey out in 1902, the cities had been ruins: "Everywhere misery in bright Oriental rags. . . . A peculiar tomblike odor of mold caught one's breath." The countryside, except for a few pioneer settlements, had been "a picture of desolation. The lowlands were mostly sand and swamp, the lean fields looked as if burnt over. . . ." One hope was held out by the German nobleman—that the Jews might create an experimental land for humanity, a New Commonwealth.

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When the misanthropes return in "1923" they come upon a Palestine flourishing as a Jewish nation at the very center of the world:

> Great ships . . . lay anchored in the roadstead between Acco and the foot of Carmel. . . . To the south . . . below the ancient, much tried city of Haifa on the curve of the shore, splendid things had grown up. Thousands of white villas gleamed out of luxuriant green gardens. . . . A magnificent city had been built beside the sapphire-blue Mediterranean.

The travelers find a nation populated by the best types of people doing the best possible job and enjoying the best possible success —a triumph of city planning and hydraulic engineering whose Master Architect is as revered as the President, and whose Engineer has a status equaled only by the Eucalyptus tree, which drains swamps naturally. Altneuland's tangible assets include chemical industries, citrus groves, a Jewish Academy patterned after the French Academy, a Science Research Institute, opera houses, and a temple. It is the land of milk and honey, of oil and potash, a self-sufficient community at the crossroads of the world's rail lines and shipping lanes, where Jews who formerly lived a life of misery and persecution in squalid ghettos now live in villas, and produce the fruits of the earth and the machine so that they may spend their leisure time singing "Schumann, Rubinstein, Wagner, Verdi, and Gounod."

The New Society's success is credited to its economic system. Mutualism—a mean between individualism and collectivism—allows for the coexistence of private enterprise and cooperative ventures, both regulated by the universal desire (enforced by the state), to make an honest profit, to share the wealth, and to encourage individual initiative. (Surprisingly, there are poor people but they have been "brought low by their own vices or lack of responsibility or misfortunes.")

There are other less tangible benefits. Because of Altneuland's existence, the world no longer contains anti-Semitism. In the New Society, avaricious, ostentatious Jews are recognized as avaricious, ostentatious people. In other nations the exodus of Jews to Altneuland has made those few who remained behind a valued minority; those who wish to assimilate can do so without guilt or resentment from others, for they are giving up an advantage rather than gaining one.

ALL THAT ALTNEULAND lacks is Judaism. Of the two religious ceremonies that occur in the novel, one appropriately enough is the Passover seder, the other the Friday evening service welcoming the Sabbath. The seder—at which members of three faiths (Moslem, Christian, and Jewish) break matzoh together—is not the traditional family supper, but an excuse for presenting the new "Haggadah"—a phonograph recording which tells the story of the exodus to Altneuland. Similarly, the welcoming of the Sabbath, that "resounded with singing and the playing of lutes" in the rebuilt Temple, evokes in the Jewish tourist first memories of Heine and then a sense of national destiny. The Temple itself is a symbol of the free commonwealth, the ideal 19th-century European community. Herzl's novel does not lack melodrama. There are lovers and there is a villain. The lovers are incidental to the book, and when they are brought together in the last pages, one can only wish them happiness. The villain, however, plays a significant part in the theme of the novel. He is "the Rabbi of Advantage," and though he never makes an appearance, he represents a potential threat to the stability of the nation. The "Rabbi of Advantage" leads a chauvinistic political party which maintains that "a non-Jew must not be accepted by the New Society." Opposing him are the leaders of the New Society whose counter platform is "we do not ask to what race or religion a man belongs. If he is a man, that is enough for us." They acknowledge that Altneuland, however much it derives its initial strength from being a Jewish movement, still stands "on the shoulders of other civilized peoples."

At a political gathering at the cooperative settlement of Neudorf, a leader of the New Society explains:

> "Neudorf was built not in Palestine, but elsewhere. It was built in England, in America, in France and in Germany. . . . A socialistic dream rose to answer every new machine invented during that peculiar nineteenth century, which has always seemed to me like a great factory where ingenious machinery was served by wretched human beings. . . . When the wishful human beings looked up, they no

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longer saw the heavens, but the factory born clouds of a Utopia."

The speaker then mentions *Looking Backward* and *Freiland,* the two most popular utopian novels of the 19th century. They failed to inspire utopian states, he says, because they were dreams based on the false premise of man's maturity. But Altneuland succeeded because the Jews, compressed by the pressure of persecution and poverty, built up a fantastic power potential that was waiting to be released. It is the physical law of the conservation of energy applied to people: the Jews are like a gas under increasing pressure in a closed system. "We did only that," the speaker concludes, "which under the given circumstances and at the given moment was an historical necessity." It is a modest but fitting comment for a 19th-century utopian, whose vision was molded by two central beliefs: that history was an inevitable process toward some great transforming event, and that the means to bring about such an event were now at hand through the revolutionary development of science and the organized use of power and machines.

This 19th-century viewpoint was provided with the one additional element it needed to be converted into Zionism as early as 1862, by Moses Hess, the one-time collaborator of Marx and Hegel. In his *Rome and Jerusalem,* Hess speaks of the coming of "the Sabbath of History"—in which world history would complete its tasks by "ushering in the messianic epoch." The message of Hess begins with the assumption that "the civilized nations are at present preparing for a common exploitation of Nature . . . based on the discoveries of science," and ends with his prediction that "the Jewish people will participate in the great historical movement of present-day humanity only when it will have its own fatherland."

Between the call of Hess and the answer of Herzl, Zionism received its strongest articulation in Leon Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation.* To Pinsker, Zionism was necessitated by anti-Semitism—a reality that needed no intellectualizations, no messianic ideals. It was this same urgent reason that led Herzl to Zionism. In 1896, he published *The Jewish State,* his first plan for a homeland. In the fervent years that followed, the first Zionist Congress met in Basel and the Jewish Colonial Trust was established, but Herzl's negotiations with the Kaiser, with the Sultan, with England's Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs to establish somewhere, anywhere, a Jewish state failed to produce any tangible results. In 1902, six years after his leadership of Zionism began, he published *Altneuland,* drawing upon *Looking Backward* for its futuristic projection of utopian technology and upon Hertzka's *Freiland* for its utopian economics that ties production to consumption, nationalizes credit, and harmonizes private and cooperative enterprise.

IN HIS INTRODUCTION to this new edition of *Altneuland,* Emanuel Neumann says that Herzl's novel became a "classic" which "helped to inspire two generations of Zionists and to encourage them on the long and tortuous road toward . . . nationhood and statehood." This is claiming too much for the novel. While it was translated into several languages and reprinted numerous times, and while its Hebrew translation, *Tel Aviv,* provided the name for a model city, *Altneuland* is not even included on the standard lists of utopian literature. This fact, along with the content of *Altneuland,* suggest that it was popular among Jews only because it was addressed to them, not because it differed from the utopianism of the day or because it mirrored or inspired any unique aspirations of Jews. Herzl's biographer, Alex Bein, says as much: "*Altneuland* carried conviction to only a tiny number of Jews, or awakened in them the will to a new life."

Bein goes on to comment on a more interesting aspect of the novel: "Even within the Zionist movement, the book did more harm than good. Many of those who stood closest to Herzl were disappointed that the novel should have been so thoroughly interpenetrated with the spirit of Western civilization." Bein describes the controversy that flared up again between Herzl and Ahad Ha'am, who criticized the novel sharply for its derivativeness and its lack of cultural Judaism. As late as 1944, Martin Buber remarked that the novel was justly criticized for this lack.

That the novel is, in fact, the very antithesis of what Herzl himself once desired can be seen in a passage from his earlier book, *The Jewish State.*

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> An interesting book, *Freiland,* by Dr. Theodor Hertzka, which appeared a few years ago, may serve to illustrate the distinction I draw between my construction and a Utopia. His is the ingenious invention of a modern mind thoroughly schooled in the principles of political economy; it is as remote from actuality as the equatorial mountain on which his dream state lies. . . . Even if I were to see Freiland societies come into being, I should regard the whole thing as a joke.

Seven years later, Herzl, no longer scorning utopian literature, produces it himself. Buber, in his *Israel and Palestine,* attributes the change to the ill fortunes of Herzl's activities. When political Zionism was making progress there was no need for *Altneuland;* when political Zionism was being ignored by the Sultan of Turkey and the rulers of Europe, Herzl felt a personal need to write a utopian novel. *Altneuland* is a testimony to Herzl's own feelings of failure. Had his negotiations proved fruitful he could have exhibited the results rather than the dream.

YET, FOR ALL its similarities to other utopian novels of the time, *Altneuland* is unique in that it possesses a reasonable facsimile of the utopia it envisioned. One can, of course, point to Israel and say that there is little of the millennium in that tautly stretched piece of land, surrounded as it is by a hostile Arab world, dependent on charity and reparations to make its economy balance, divided into a multiplicity of political parties between which there are real differences of philosophy, and split by religious and racial controversies. Yet, the significant fact remains that both *Altneuland* and Israel express a desire and an effort to bring about utopia.

Ben Gurion's speech at the 25th World Zionist Congress, asking world Jewry to send Israel its youth, was based mainly on an allegiance to Zion; included in this allegiance was a devotion to "the Messianic vision of redemption for the Jewish people and all mankind." Such a vision, he stressed, was not "the doctrine of extreme nationalism which considers only itself, its hopes and desires. It is rather the national Jewish mission integrated with a universal human mission; it is the supreme expression of the genius of the Hebrew prophecy and most of the books of the Bible." Ben Gurion develops this theme throughout his speech, twisting it several ways to support other arguments but always tying Israel and "universal salvation" together. He recognizes that a supra-national idealism is now his best argument for attracting Western immigrants.

Altneuland depicts such an appeal early in Zionist history and remains the literary expression of the tie between Israel as it exists today, a Hebrew-speaking Jewish nation, and Israel as it existed in the Western mind of Theodor Herzl, a romantic utopia wedded to the economic dreams of 19th-century Europe, where men still believed they had the future in their hands if only they made the effort to grasp it.

It is a degree of aspiration that we in the West today have mostly forgotten. Our contemporary utopian literature is not that of the Bellamys and the Herzls but rather that of the Huxleys and the Orwells, where the future is depicted not as cooperative communities happily producing wealth but as babies in test tubes or boots stepping on the faces of men.

Today, Herzl's bearded portrait looks down upon a Jewish parliament legislating for a Jewish state. There is a world of difference between what he envisioned and what those seated beneath him are creating. And yet there is still enough in common between the two to justify the better dreams of the 19th-century utopians which still survive the pessimism of the 20th century.

CRUSADING JOURNALISTS

THE MUCKRAKERS, 1902–1912. Edited by ARTHUR and LILA WEINBERG. *Simon & Schuster. 449 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by ERIC L. MCKITRICK

IT HAS BEEN argued that the uniqueness of the "Progressive Era" as a time of muckraking has been somewhat overplayed. It might even be said, as Daniel Aaron believes, that the literature of exposure published in the 90's was at least as good as that which appeared in the first decade and a half of the 20th century; in some ways it may have been better. I myself know of a study currently being done on the 1870's: even in that "genteel" age, there was muckraking on a variety of public evils to an extent

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we seem either to have forgotten about or are just unaware of today. Muckraking, moreover, goes on; the magazine article, its most serviceable vehicle, is a perennial device for the promotion of reform.

But granted all this, how do we account for the community's acute and extraordinary sensitivity to this form of literature in the Roosevelt-Taft-Wilson era and not in that, say, of Hayes, Arthur, and Collis P. Huntington? The articles collected and so ably arranged by the Weinbergs in this handsome and useful volume are representative of their age. They were published in periodicals that had a substantial circulation; they were widely read; their resonance was considerable; and they functioned as agendas for various kinds of action.

That all this should occur when it did may, to some extent, have been a generational matter. Other kinds of tension besides those of class are needed to explain the cross-purposes of American life, and it is quite conceivable that at least one of them (in the very absence, indeed, of rigidly extended class and family structures) is discords between generations. The men and women who came to maturity in the middle 90's and early 1900's had grown up beneath the moral shadow of the Civil War—the profoundest event of the national experience —without having had any direct personal touch with it. For their fathers' generation, the one that had fought it, the crusade for the Union had provided a backlog of virtue and manhood, a kind of moral bank account that could be drawn upon for the remainder of a lifetime. A generation of peculiarly self-assured and self-righteous men could industrialize and transform the country, look out for their own interests, and be troubled by few self-doubts or self-questionings over the passing damage. Their conviction of moral authority and the basic insensitivity so characteristic of the men of the Civil War generation had been reinforced by the symbolic life of the entire nation; each patriotic holiday could protectively hold up their achievements in a form abstract enough to certify everything else. But for their successors, without such protection, the experience of coming to manhood in the world being created by these formidable fathers must have been profoundly alienating. Personal reminiscences of the period betray this often enough between the lines.

But it was not only a matter, in 1900 and in the ensuing years of reform, of generations confronting each other. As the economic frights of the 90's were followed by prosperity, a whole nation was free to confront itself with the price it had agreed to pay for its own material success. Decrying, for example, the exploitation of children in the textile mills, Edwin Markham would demand in anguished guilt:

> And why do these children know no rest, no play, no learning, nothing but the grim grind of existence? Is it because we are all naked and shivering? Is it because there is sudden destitution in the land? Is it because pestilence walks at noonday? Is it because war's red hand is pillaging our storehouses and burning our cities? No, forsooth! Never before were the storehouses so crammed to bursting with bolts and bales of every warp and woof. No, forsooth! The children, while yet in the gristle, are ground down that a few more useless millions may be heaped up. We boast that we are leading the commercialism of the world, and we grind in our mills the bones of the little ones to make good our boast.

And so it was with railroads, finance, civic corruption, patent medicine, impure food, tenements, prisons, working conditions, urban delinquency in all its forms. A legion of able and knowing publicists, encouraged by the editors of weekly and monthly periodicals that were building a nationwide circulation, began spying out evils in every corner of the country's daily life. From all the evidence, the public's capacity for scandalized fascination and guilty response during these years was extraordinary. "It looks to me," said Mr. Hennessy, "as though the counthry was goin' to th' divvle." "Put down that magazine, Hinnissy!"

The most famous of the muckraking journalists—Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Thomas Lawson, George Kibbe Turner, Charles Edward Russell, Ray Stannard Baker—are represented in this volume by pieces from *McClure's, Cosmopolitan, Collier's, American,* and *Everybody's,* magazines that reached thousands of readers. The articles are grouped

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under the pertinent evils, and the editors have prefaced each group with helpful background notes and commentary. A number of these same articles are known to have contributed quite directly to reform. President Roosevelt in his efforts to strengthen the Interstate Commerce Commission gratefully acknowledged the literary assistance of Ray Stannard Baker; Charles Edward Russell's description of convict-lease practices in Georgia had immediate and salutary consequences in that state; the work of the same writer apparently encouraged Trinity Church to tear down four blocks of its worst tenements two years after Trinity's landlord policies had been described to the appalled readers of *Hampton's*. Every student of American history knows about Upton Sinclair's fruitless efforts to promote socialism by exposing conditions in the meat-packing houses, and how he nonetheless contributed to Pure Food legislation with his stories of tubercular employees falling into the vats and being rendered into lard.

THE BEST OF these journalists seem still to be the ones we always thought were the best, Steffens, Tarbell, and Baker. Reflected in their prose is a simple clarity, a sense of fact, and a judiciousness of mind that make us question whether successful muckraking really has much affinity with revolutionary technique. Even Steffens, with all his amazing vivaciousness, has no use for mere rhetorical tricks. A fair number of the others, of course, did not come up to these standards, and there were some who resorted to sensationalism and humbug. The archetype was Thomas Lawson, whose exposés of high finance skirt the fine edge of hysteria and manage to sound, at the same time, like the patter of the shell-game operator. David Graham Phillips's "Treason of the Senate" is crossroads revivalism, full of imps and demons but not to be taken seriously as reporting. William Hard's profile of Speaker Joe Cannon is vaguely libelous. Even "Making Steel and Killing Men," Hard's otherwise admirable call for better safety rules in heavy industry, is rendered somewhat repellent by a tone of wheedling incantation which the author probably thought was very artistic. It is not entirely fair to insinuate, as we sometimes do, that Theodore Roosevelt was merely temporizing when he suggested in his famous Gridiron Club address of 1906 that muckraking was a device susceptible of perversion.

Nonetheless, the device is a perennial one. Americans have come to take it for granted and have built it into their culture for a wide variety of uses. Muckraking may have come into prominence and received its nickname at a time when inflamed sensibilities coincided with ballooning circulation in the periodical media. But the Progressive Era is historically instructive for its continuing features as well as its unique ones—and muckraking, with all its strengths and liabilities, was just such a feature. It has, moreover, a certain cultural distinctiveness that is worth noting. When European journalists and intellectuals confront great wrongs, they issue manifestoes and statements of conscience that receive much publicity. The parallel act, for an American, is to expose something.

This can, of course, become a kind of drug. The American reading public's susceptibility to inside dopesterism can easily be perverted into cheap cynicism, as is plain today from any issue of the metropolitan tabloid press, to say nothing of the shadier weeklies and monthlies. But then anything can be perverted. For a society which is so organized that the energy for purposeful action in the public interest must be recruited *ad hoc* and mobilized from a diffuse variety of sources, the factual "exposure" is still one of the most healthy, responsible, and constructive forms the culture has developed. To see what has become of it today, you need not bother with *Confidential;* just pick up one of the first-class monthlies. I imagine that neither *Harper's* nor COMMENTARY would think of itself as a "muckraking" magazine, but if not they are mistaken; they are the best we have, in the best vein of a good tradition. From their pages you can pick your own crusade. Urban renewal, segregation, narcotics, teachers' colleges, gambling, metropolitan real estate: there they all are, and if you want to "do something" you will find there what you need to begin with, the facts. The morality that informs these accounts is not the same as that which informs manifestoes, but it may be more dependable, deriving as it does from the best standards of American journalism. We can thank Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell, and many another who helped

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set those standards, for the overriding imperative, which is getting the story straight. When that side of it can be depended on, as it certainly can in our best muckraking, a considerable share of our moral energy is kept free for constructive uses, assuming that is where we want to channel it. This is because it is understood that claims are being made on our reason as well as our sympathies.

ON THE WAY UP

EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS. By BRIAN JACKSON and DENNIS MARSDEN. *Routledge & Kegan Paul. 268 pp. 28 shillings.*

Reviewed by ROGER OWEN

ANYONE LIVING IN England cannot fail to have noticed that, in the postwar period of increased social mobility, interest in social differences and their manifestations has become more and not less acute. It is as if the real blurring of traditional class differences which has taken place has been a kind of challenge. It seems to have led to an almost anthropological interest in classifying and defining the structure as it shifts and changes. One recalls, for example, the amount of attention which was aroused a few years ago by the "U" and "Non-U" speech game, and more recently, one is reminded of the popular success achieved by such diverse writers as John Betjeman and Richard Hoggart, each in his different way sustained by the English obsession. Nor is it surprising that sociology should at last be catching on, and that—like more hallowed forms of inquiry—it should work the rich mine offered by a class structure as complex and delicate as England's.

A recently published book which falls into this context of interest and which has aroused something of a stir is *Education and the Working Class* by Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden. The authors have studied and meditated upon the lives of eighty-eight young men and women who in the last decade or two have been translated from a northern industrial working-class background into what one must roughly call the middle classes. Their route has taken them from state primary schools through selective secondary schools and then on to university or college. Most of them are now "professional" people, and a great many of them are themselves teachers, (the authors detect something "regressive" here). They are all of them different from their parents who never moved up the ladder. Even today it takes a lot of climbing, and not everyone has access to the ladder.

The state educational system of Britain is loosely hierarchic, reflecting the whole society. Secondary education (after the age of eleven) is divided between so called "modern" and "grammar" schools, and children are selected at about the age of eleven by various procedures (IQ tests, examinations, interviews) for the kind of school from which it is deemed they will derive the most benefit. Theoretically, "modern" and "grammar" schools enjoy what, in the jargon, is called "parity of esteem." In fact people think of the selection procedures as a qualifying exam for admission to the academic or "grammar" school, and use terms like "pass" or "fail." At the Grammar School, the bright minority (the *lucky* minority as well—this book shows eloquently that selection procedures are often social, or only nominally academic) receives a rigorously academic education not different in content from that offered to the upper middle classes at the old "public" (in Britain the word means "private") schools. They are equipped (if they stay at school long enough) to enter universities, and therefore to remain in or aspire to joining the professional middle classes.

I myself passed an examination at the age of eleven which took me to Grammar School and thence to a university. Had I not passed that examination, I would have received a different kind of education, and would possibly have remained "working class." (The nomenclature itself is peculiarly English. Nobody speaks of the "American Working Class.") In a quite strict sense this book then is about me—had I lived a few miles from where I did live, I might have been in the sample. In fact, I find my experiences mirrored in the book very frequently. The authors themselves are from the same stable and could be included in the study. It is as if they write "a Tahitian, trained in London, had returned to the South Seas as an anthropologist." A good deal of

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the special interest of this book is of a faintly introverted kind, and it has been much discussed by other "Tahitians." It contains, nevertheless, some points of wider interest.

What did we know already about the kind of person in Britain who has been removed from his background by education? Some people have seen the Angry Young Man (the working-class, provincial anti-hero of Amis and Osborne) as the expression of postwar social change. Equipped at the expense of the state with a gentleman's education, the Angry Young Man can find no proper outlet for his skills in a society whose key roles go to *real* gentlemen or scientists. *Déclassé and rootless, he makes affirmations* of loyalty toward his past (drinking beer, being "blunt") and marries further up the hierarchy in revenge against it. From his vantage point as an "outsider" (the whole subject is thick with the clichés of literary journalism) he turns—it is contended—a fiercely critical gaze on the dead conventionalities which characterize much of British life. The image must be a familiar one even to Americans, and need not be anatomized further here.

WHAT EMERGES VERY clearly from this study is that the image is almost wholly misleading. Far from being "angry" or critical or especially honest, the educated working-class boy seems especially prone to self-deception and self-satisfaction. Most of the young people interviewed by the authors were completely without any radical impulses. Few of them, for example, had any doubts about the efficacy of the educational system which had separated them—to use their own unpleasant terms—from "the dim ones" and "the future Teddy Boys." Their politics, on the whole, were Conservative, and their style of life conventionally bourgeois. The authors describe them as being, for the most part, "rigidly orthodox" and they substantiate this judgment with a good deal of evidence. If the eighty-eight young men and women from one industrial town approximate even only roughly to the national group of which they are a small sample, one cannot but be disturbed.

"I was curling up with fright when my mother came to see me at University," said one girl, and the remark points to the real literary prototype of these young men and women—not Jimmy Porter, but Pip in *Great Expectations*. One is reminded of course of Pip in London, confronted to his embarrassment by Joe Gargery, and of that later confrontation with the convict Magwitch, the apotheosis of "lowness." And one is reminded of *Great Expectations* again and again. Like Pip, for example, they—we—felt early a sense of apartness, a sense of some special destiny. By the age of nine, they and I were in small "special" classes, being coached for "The Scholarship," as the selective examination was portentously known. At the Grammar School, "a host of injunctions and suggestions from the teachers spoke of the gulf that separated them from the children they had left behind." One girl speaks of seeing the Grammar School—in her early years there—in "a kind of haze" and to many boys the new world of gowned masters, tall prefects, blazers, and badges had about it the dream-like quality of the Public School stories (Billy Bunter and "Greyfriars"—the world characterized so perceptively by George Orwell) which they had read in their weekly comics.

"School" and "neighborhood" competed for their loyalty, and in reconciling the two worlds, they developed a good deal of "tact." At school they strove to imitate the received English accents of their teachers, but at home they "roughened it up a bit." Generalizing, the authors intimate that they are now often "over-accommodating" and "emollient." "Fairly early on" says one interviewee, "I decided what changes I was going to make in my accent, and I made them." Later they begin to feel a "curiously external feeling" about their parents, and begin to look at them, in the words of one girl, as "specimens." Their academic performances at their university fall off badly—with a frequency which cannot be accidental—after good beginnings, and this decline the authors attribute speculatively (and perhaps oversimply) to "a lost feeling for source; means; purpose: a loss heightened by the absence of the sustaining powers of social and family relationships."

That a price is exacted for the gains made by growing away from one's parents is a truth which many Americans must be peculiarly fitted to perceive. In the case of these young men and women, it seems especially high however, and the authors point to a

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deficiency in the content of the education they received, an education which failed "to foster the human impulses which should bridge the gulf." American supporters of segregated education for the gifted child might well read this book. "I didn't have friends at school: only rivals," says one girl as she recalls the intensely competitive course she pursued, with its frequent examination hurdles. And in terms of real literacy, the academic study of English literature, for example, has had little long-term effect. The largest proportion of this sample now read only detective stories, Westerns, or light fiction. Very few of them read anything which is likely to deepen their sense of life. It is perhaps the frequent failure of the Grammar School to transmit the literary culture of the country to which one can relate the absence of self-knowledge marking the way these people have dealt with their experience.

A study on this comparatively small scale tends to give an overschematic picture of a situation which one knows to be more complex; and for all its deployment of sociological techniques, it contains a good deal of speculation. It is the first serious study, however, of its kind. It demonstrates very convincingly that selective examinations are often only nominally academic; that middle-class children make more informed use of a system accessible to all, and that compared with working-class children, they "over-perform"; that segregated education works depressingly in self-perpetuating stereotypes. It points conclusively—as other studies have—to the loss and wastage of ability under the present system. It shows that a country in which a considerable degree of socialist public ownership is established, could do with the kind of egalitarianism which is more widespread in capitalist America. It should do a lot of good.

A NATURAL POET

WORKS AND DAYS AND OTHER POEMS. By IRVING FELDMAN. *Atlantic–Little Brown. 121 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by RALPH J. MILLS, JR.

IRVING FELDMAN BELONGS neither to the camp of academic poets—though he is on a college faculty—nor to the clamoring throngs who propose hysteria and free association as ingredients of art. Yet, curiously enough, he is what the beatnik writers so often claim to be, and so seldom are—a natural poet. I don't intend to suggest by this term that Feldman is uniquely chosen by the muse or that his work is composed in a lightning flash; but I do think poetry comes to him as the most natural sort of activity, as if nothing else would do but such expression. This is a guess, of course, yet I believe it is supported both by the ease with which Mr. Feldman handles himself poetically and by the surprising breadth of this first collection from a man still in his early thirties.

The range of *Works and Days* is its immediately striking quality. It extends from the lyric and meditative poems with which the book opens, to the title sequence of autobiographical poems, and then on to mockery and satire, finally finishing with a series of philosophical poems. These parts range also in quality, but all of them possess the outstanding characteristic of Mr. Feldman's style—his insistence upon a dramatic and rhetorical voice as his chief mode of expression. The stanza which begins "The Prophet" is a good example:

I am your stone. I seek the center.
Lean back, bend over, I know one way.
You cannot move. I weigh. I weigh.
I am your doom. Your city shall not burn.
The flood has gone by, the fever passed.
Get home. Empty the square
As your hearts are empty. Only I am there.
Everywhere. I bring all things down.

The reader has to accept this rhetoric, this adoption of a role, if he is going to appreciate Mr. Feldman's poems at all. But at times this reader wants to resist because Feldman's monologues can stiffen into empty formality, go flat and false. The poet then looks like nothing so much as a ventriloquist suddenly exposed. When Feldman is truly at home in his dramatic masks we have the uncanny sensation of listening to two voices, his own within that of his imagined speaker, so that the language uttered is the speech of both in strange and moving unison. In "The Saint," the first and one of the best poems in the book, the speaker tells God how a life dedicated to

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goodness and holiness draws one farther from Him since it compels a man to lose himself in sympathy for human misery and suffering in the world. The last stanza puts the saint's predicament with great force:

But this goodness gives me away from you,
For love has scattered my soul through
Fields and towns. I rise like grass
Against myself, so thick I cannot pass
To you till I wither in every part.
O God, I would have been your hollow gulf!
Why did you put your dam across my heart
To overwhelm me with myself!

Though we enter the circumstances created by the speaker and the implications of what he says, there is an underlying sense of the poet's own urgency that gives the poem the force of a personal act. That personal element is to be found in almost every successful poem in the book. Mr. Feldman derives much of his strength as a writer from his complex and intense struggle to define himself. His somber vision of existence—formed from painful emotion and corrosive wit—is that of a man who is at once religious and skeptical: the tormented Jew who is resigned to his inheritance and yet critical of it. But though the same deeply felt and conflicting attitudes undoubtedly stand behind Feldman's meditations about Prometheus and others as they do in poems about himself, the former hold up least well of any in the collection: they sound forced and are too close to the standard—and now trite—poetic idiom of the day for comfort. The best poems are those in which Mr. Feldman discards any notion of mythic figures chained to lonely crags through a thousand autumns and speaks directly to the reader from his own experience of life. Take the beginning stanzas of "Works and Days," an obviously autobiographical series of poems:

Ghetto-born, depression-bred,
Squeezed between the finger and thumb
Of Famine and traditional Dread,
I learned all history's a pogrom.

Scared tutelage of the dead.
The hand that strokes the silken shawl,
I learned, may not strike red.
A Jew's defense, the Wailing Wall.

Learned to be patient under blows,
Suspect the world, yet ready to be
Wiped across my neighbor's nose,
Chided then for being filthy.

Learned the cost of life in cents,
To measure every ring and rag.
Saw Israel's shining tents
Fold up like a doctor's bag.

Learned the little-bourgeois ruse;
To save the day against the night,
And night for day, then lose
Them both, worrying if I were right.

Free of the flood, our ghetto tied
Smugly to the rope of His wrath,
We thought to put the world aside
Like the dirty ring after a bath.

The ragged, almost careless energy of this passage, along with its harsh and yet moving irony, represent what seems to me the most distinctive and winning feature of Feldman's poetry to date. Certainly, some of the monologues and reflective poems come off well enough, but the author's greatest weaknesses also lie in this same direction. Compare the following two passages. The first one is taken from a group of philosophical reveries that conclude the book; it is entitled "Breath (A phantom dialogue)" and falls under the larger title of "Dying"; the speaker is Prometheus:

Where will I find the space, the breath, the breathing?
Where? But where is the cup? Here,
Dead center of the wide world,
The instants are a breath apart,
Specks of light scattered through a stone;
And freezing wind comes and goes,
Shaking the grizzled twilight
Till the granite leaves are shaken down;
Their voices cry aloud with mine, "Who are you
Beside me, calling? What echo of myself?"

And so forth. I can only see Feldman teasing himself with words here into a semblance of profundity; it is a rhetoric from which all substance has flown, a scarecrow rhetoric. One might be more annoyed if it were not for that other genuine, outspoken, and unconventional Irving Feldman whose accurate right hand has little acquaintance with the left hand which wrote the passage above and a number of others much like it.

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Here is the other Irving Feldman, in a poem called "Reading Rousset's 'L'Univers Concentrationnaire' ":

Who holds my book and turns the page?
Thinking of my brother Jews
I have crossed over the edge
And as one dead walk among the dead.
Who is it sits to read?—
Now that I wander like a shade
Bitter and free. Yet I who am ash
Fear they'll purge smoke as they did flesh
As even I forgot our death.
Who heaves my chest? who would draw
my breath?

So it is that *Works and Days* divides itself three ways: into the solid reflective and dramatic poems such as "Saint and Leper," "Adam," or "The Prophet"; the philosophical poems, which show Feldman giving in to a hollow if sincere oratory that obscures the singularity of his own voice; the direct or personal poems, which are this writer's finest achievement. The work done in this last category reveals to me the essential poet breaking through the various conventions and mannerisms that any young writer must test in order to discover what will ultimately be for him the right order of language, the poetic speech that is nearest to that inner self whose final truth can never be spoken in words. His future poetry one hopes will develop from the direct and frequently autobiographical poems he has written so far, which demonstrate Yeats's conviction that *"there's more enterprise/In walking naked."* These poems are rooted in Feldman's commitment to a perspective which is peculiarly Jewish; one which is personal but is at the same time ancient and general.

At his best, Irving Feldman exhibits a forcefulness and honesty, an ability to introduce both the self and the reality of its experience into poetry that brings him close to several of the very good young poets, including Robert Creeley and Denise Levertov. Though he differs from the latter in his choice of literary ancestry and technique, he shares with them a compulsion to write unhesitatingly out of the heart of his life, his experience as a particular person; and the truest poetry has always had those origins.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

ALFRED CHESTER, a new contributor, is a young free-lance writer living in New York.

DAVID T. BAZELON has just finished a book on *The Paper Economy.*

LEONARD GREENBAUM, another new contributor, has been a teaching fellow in English at the University of Michigan and is presently an editor with the Phoenix Memorial Project for nuclear energy research.

ERIC L. MCKITRICK is associate professor of history at Columbia.

ROGER OWEN, still another new contributor, is educational advisor to the BBC School Broadcasting Department in Nottingham.

RALPH J. MILLS, JR., the fourth new contributor to this month's review section, teaches English in the Committee on Social Thought of the University of Chicago.

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